

TURNING

# POINT

for

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## THE MARSHALL-MURRAY CIO CONVENTION

### I- Marshall-Murray Production in Portland

There is so much criminal talent available for Marshall Plan propa-  
ganda these days, that run-of-the-mill intellectual lackeys with an af-  
finity for the state department may as well be warned bluntly that, in  
prostituting their brains for the Marshall Plan, they must be prepared  
to travel in such brilliant company that their contributions will pro-  
bably be under-appreciated. Does the college professor who has decided  
to enlist in the promotion of war culture think that his lowly PhD auto-  
matically ranks him with such veterans as Max Eastman and James Burnham?  
Has he that propagandist's fantasy which puts a Dubinsky at the skirts  
of the Pope (with J. Lovestone, ex-General Sec'y of the CPUSA, right be-  
hind at Dubinsky's skirts)? All prospective ingredients of Pax Ameri-  
cana must humbly accept their allotted positions and the rapid turnover  
in favorites in the SENSATIONAL, STUPENDOUS, COLOSSAL, Cecil B. deMille-  
styled Marshall production. They must bow to the latest development --  
that the overwhelming majority of stars cast for the Marshall Plan will  
hereafter be American labor leaders.

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On his return from Europe recently, Eric Johnson emphasized the new, absolutely indispensable role of American labor leaders in selling the Marshall Plan in Europe. The Marshall Plan is having a tough time in Europe; the European workers are having a tough time. Who could better be the hypocritical funnels for pouring anti-Soviet doubletalk into empty stomachs than America's labor leaders--with a little Social-Democrat-Trotskyite guidance. Johnson has formally applied the experience of European capitalism to American problems by assigning main duties to Social Democracy. This is not a new technique in America, but it is now projected as an organized and conscious scheme. In a keynote address to the CIO Convention in Portland, Justice Douglas worked on these ideas. The CIO obliged; it out-warmongered the worst veterans of American war mongering. It assumed leading responsibility for the selling of the Marshall Plan and for the selling-out not only of the American working class, but of the international working class. The CIO Convention re-Hearst ahead of season for war and fascism--all this with a union label. While the AFL Convention was certainly newly improved and streamlined (with the aid of Trotskyite Max Eastman's contributions), the CIO out-trumpeted it and proved itself the worst threat in the best position to hammer away at the dwindling defenses of Democracy in the US.

We will consider, briefly, the achievements of the Marshall-Murray Plan in Portland, the Left's deeper entrenchment in cowardice and retreat, the background, and the CPUSA leadership's postmortem on the Convention.

The incidental music at the Portland debauché included: jeers, cat-calls, gavel pounding, "Go back to Russia", "Take a walk!"...Joe Stalin here, there, and everywhere...Dirty Jew Feinglass--all this highlighted by the highly irreligious invective of Murray. Adding to this indignity, the left hit a new low in working class indignity by treading on each other while madly racing for cover.

## II-The Right: "Murray Taught Us Finking in A Hurry"

The union "brothers" engaged in fratricide. The right, having prepared for some time by raiding, came to Portland with a prepared liquidation list. The left, having prepared for some time by receding and seceding, came with a prepared capitulation list. This well balanced preparation on either side gave the convention a degree of carousing orderliness. The capitalist papers agreed that Murray came through: the old boy may have taken his time, but now he's come through with a "Com-mie" smashup which exceeds expectations.

What was achieved by the Murraymen, by Reuther, Curran, Potofsky, et al? A new Convention procedure was initiated, a special point on a finking agenda: UNIONS TO BE DENOUNCED. At a time when unions must cooperate, they give each other the knife. At a time when no single union in the U.S. has half-acquitted itself of its duties, the worst offenders offer judgment on neglected organizing drives. The CIO handed the bosses "lockout" keys. Murray denounced Donald Henderson and the Food, Tobacco, and Agricultural Workers and made it clear that they deserved to be raided. He listed Flaxer's United Public Workers and Durkin's United Office and Professional Workers for the axe. He raffled off the Retail, Wholesale, Warehouse and Department Store Employees to

influential bidder, Potofsky of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. It was bitter humor, having such union raiders as the Murray-commandos criticize left unions for poor recruiting records. Murray danced the Queen's OFF WITH THEIR HEADS episodes from "Alice in Wonderland" while the left, as its contribution, danced the subdued Tea Party from the same script. Dancing honors were stolen by Dormouse Durkin who would almost awaken occasionally, almost to object.

Pursuant to the authority vested in the divine right of Queens, the Murraymen ordered Grant Oakes and the United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers into the lions den, the UAW--which they'd reuther not. The UFEMW was given 60 days--or Off With Their Heads. The UAW was given this prize in acknowledgement of its earnest raiding attitude towards the UFEMW.

The ninth floor of the CPUSA had ordered the Greater New York CIO Council to be sacrificed as a burnt offering to Murray, so after Murray's OFF WITH THEIR HEADS; the decapitation proceedings were orderly. In fact, the four salaried officials of the Council won a point, severance pay, for the following members of the working class: the four salaried officials of the Council. Also, Saul Mills received the special privilege of removing his personal papers before the looting of the Council's headquarters started (perhaps on the basis that intrigue deserves a little privacy).

The Murraymen decided "That the Greater New York CIO Council has brought discredit on the national CIO by the slavish adherence of the council to the line and dictates of the Communist Party." The left accepted this like good fellows following a slavish Dennis-Foster unCommunist line. Durkin thought it "unfortunate that that case came up" but explained that the council would "accept the decision, turn over the funds and property, and we won't make an appeal to the convention. We are abstaining..." Other leaders of the left did not abstain; they voted with the Murraymen. But the four did not lose all; remember the severance pay!

How about that large mouthful, the UE? How did Murray swallow that? Murray is a reptile ideologically, not abdominally; he knows better than to swallow unions whole. His diet discipline is to have a union predigested before he OFF WITH THEIR HEADS and swallows. In this case, he promoted an understanding with Pres. Fitzgerald of UE that if he came over to the Murray school of dancing, he could keep working through the depression. Fitzgerald accepted the hint and started predigesting the UE for the coming Murraymen's repast.

Murray danced rather profanely. He spoke of his left brothers as "vicious" and "filthy". Murray saddled the CIO with a program of war, he separated the CIO from a program of working class militancy, and he turned it into a hoodlum outfit. The honorable left danced very quietly as it retreated--the dance of the dead. The CIO became the AFL.

### III-The Left: "Murray Taught Us Dancing in A Hurry"

Dissenting with the CIO Officers' Report (a Marshall Planned Report), a minority report was presented by Henderson (FTAW), Potash (Fur)

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and Johnson (Marine Cooks and Stewards). This diplomatic offering included some good points--but purely as a formality, since they were not fought for. It also called attention to the "achievements" of Philip Murray. Its only feeble word for the Progressive Party was to snivel that it had helped clarify issues in the elections. It did not condemn unwaveringly what had to be condemned. This half hearted sally, practically unsupported by the left leaders, earned a roar from Murray that there would be no more minority reports except in the case of a defeated majority report (more new CIO procedure). In voting for the majority report, the left dirtied itself. Valor was represented by Dormouse Durkin who girded up his loins and abstained. Retreat, as the better part of valor, was represented by the left leaders of UE, Furniture, and ILWU who voted for the Murray report. This should indicate the mere hypocritical formality of the token opposition submitted by the left for face-saving later in the D.W. Murray taught Dormouse Durkin to speak only when spoken to. "SIT DOWN", he bellowed at Durkin, who finding himself without the benefit of legal counsel at the moment, sat down.

Murray knew at the outset that the harder he hit at the left, the more quickly and quietly they'd fall: "Let these apostles of communism (the left was hardly worthy of such praise from the Catholic Church) in the course of this debate on the floor of this Convention, stand up and be counted like men. If they have any convictions they should exercise the right to give expression to them here. We do not want the Communist Party over in New York to be pulling the strings and having them act here like Charlie McCarthy." Not even this hypocritical rib awakened one Communist to get up and do a job on Murray. The D.W. has neglected this phase of the Convention in its preoccupation with face-saving criticism of unnamed "Left-progressives."

The N.Y. Council was destroyed; the "Left-progressives" abstained or voted for the destruction. Fitzgerald proudly "didn't give a damn for Russia", accused Vishinsky and Molotov of "sabre rattling and war-mongering", declared that if President Truman made a "sincere effort", he would "tell the Progressive Party to go to hell" and join the "Truman bandwagon"; his left-er brothers Emsak and Mattles were undisturbed. Fitzgerald expressed confidence in Murray; Emsak nominated him for office. The attitude held that if Fitzgerald is beginning to slip toward Murray, the left must be very careful to treat him nice--as it did with Murray. After all, didn't the left, in its minority officer's report, share the confidence in Murray of which Fitzgerald spoke?

Then there was the little dance by simpering, ersatz Communist Ben Gold who attempted to prove that the Progressive Party did a service by electing Truman. There seems to be a driving logic which makes the high bureaucrat of the Furworkers the low groveller of the CIO Convention. Such characters heap worse indignity on the Communist movement than the vile language of Murray.

The Communist leadership of the working class, when openly attacked and dared to answer, was indisposed. The Progressive Party was allied six feet under by its own labor-leading members. Peace was not fought for. Union democracy was excommunicated. A fighting program for the CIO, for the improvement of the lot of the American workers was

... lost in the shuffle--and not by accident. The Marshall Plan was the big show with all the pornographic side shows of anti-Soviet, red, and Jew baiting, union raiding and finking.

#### IV-Previous Instruction in Dancing

Nothing as completely destructive as the Portland Convention could have happened without the most extensive preparation. One has only to remember the CIO "Non-Interference Resolution" at the Atlantic City Convention of the CIO in Nov. 1946, written and signed by leading Communists. Or--the United Nations Veto Resolution at the N.Y. State CIO Convention in Sept. 1947, which condemned "the excessive use of the veto power" by the S.U.--and was supported by the CP delegates. Or--the CPUSA's support for the Marshall Plan at the Boston CIO Convention last year, where the known Communists stood up and applauded Marshall.\* Such actions, repeated over and over in all parts of the country, laid the basis for Murray's pushover victories.

The most odious recent development in the CPUSA leadership's sabotage is compliance with the Taft-Hartley affidavits, (most recently in the N.Y. Dep't store locals and the UOPWA). The CP leadership offers the following rules clearly demonstrated in the UOPWA. 1-Remove a well known Communist from any office facing the threat of the T-H affidavit. Preferably, he should resign with a stirring principled speech in which he declares he would never sign the affidavits. 2-Replace the known Communist with either an unknown Communist or a trustworthy sympathizer under instructions to sign the T-H affidavits--"with regret". 3-Create for the displaced Communist a new office not covered by the T-H Law. 4-In any union where Party leaders are engaged in an open fight with the machine in power (as in the NLU today) attack all officials who sign the affidavits for selling the workers out. Such finagling is hardly designed to earn the workers' respect for the Communist Party.

Matters can become even more fantastic than this. Under CP direction, eight locals of the RWDSWU (Dep't Store, etc.) seceded from their international in order, they stated, to avoid signing the T-H affidavits. Some, having seceded, about-faced and signed the affidavits. At this late date in the international Communist movement, there is nothing more completely out of the picture than a left secession from a reactionary international or federation. Such leftism, sectarianism, and adventurism were denounced both as the abandoning of the workers to the worst reactionary influences and as the isolation of the left. Today, when the N.C. of the CPUSA orders a trial experiment in secession, it is not leftism, sectarianism or adventurism. It is and can only be enemy sabotage, the FBI working through the highest offices of the Communist Party (a historic habit of the secret service in any country). No real Communists could blunder with the consistency of the National Committee of the CPUSA. When mistakes are expected, when they come through on schedule, when they are repeated regularly, and when they are always followed by buck-passing criticism of "left-progressives"--there's something rotten in the woodwork of the ninth floor of the CP headquarters.

Add to this the Party fizzles in UAW, NLU, TWU, and many others, and it is obvious that Murray had a clear field. There was nothing to

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worry about, nothing unexpected. The so-called Communists retreated and dragged the whole left with them. If in the course of retreat, individual Communists or an office holders' clique (NNU) temporarily put on a show of fight, it was only on the crassest machine level. So long as it is obvious to the reactionary leaders of the CIO that the rank and file Communist is not allowed to fight, so long as the rank and file Communist fails to understand this, the systematic destruction of the American labor movement will continue, and America will slip closer to war and fascism. If the American left can be made to dance backwards to the contrived tunes of the FBI through the mouths of supposedly radical leaders, it can logically, at a certain point, be forced to dance to those same tunes pipd directly from Murray.

#### V-Dance Analysis by the CPUSA Leadership--Post Mortem

With as much care as it plans its mistakes, the leadership of the CPUSA offers criticism of those mistakes. But, it is never to blame; mythical "left progressives" are. The criticism of the mistakes might well be written even before the mistakes are ordered down through channels as necessary retreats.

The D.W. of Dec. 19, 1948 carried a special CIO-AFL Convention Supplement. The Williamsons and the Morrises made the usual coroner's examination and report and found errors at the Convention: capitulation, lack of a good fight on the UOPWA, N.Y. CIO Council, etc. Secession was frowned on. They hope that those who have had illusions about the Murray forces will have them no more. These criminal hypocrites are belaboring their own signed advice, their own orders, and casting the blame on the great mysterious left-progressive WHODUNNIT. The ordinary D.W. reader doesn't know the facts because the D.W. doesn't report them. How can he condemn a Gold for his cowardly remarks when he doesn't know that a Gold was the "left-progressive" referred to? How can he spit on capitulation for a "mess of Potash" when a "left-progressive", unnamed, committed the sin? Here it helps to read also the dirty capitalist press (and find a little truth via the "negation of the negation").

We would like to examine a few tidbits specifically--as gleaned from the D.W.'s critical Supplement. Williamson writes: "Without detracting from the main emphasis of the significance and contribution of introducing and fighting for a constructive Left-progressive program, the CIO members, and in the first place the Left-progressive forces themselves, must recognize serious weaknesses and even capitulation of some forces in this fight. (TP's underlining)

Notice the supposed unimportance of the mistakes: basically, it seems, the wonderful job done merits Williamson's main emphasis. Next the incomplete truth: a left-progressive program was introduced. That's about all--just introduced, until Murray said STOP and the "left-progressive" forces STOPPED. Then the big lie, that this program was fought for, slips in: this program was not fought for--even as witnessed by the D.W. Supplement itself. And finally, the buck-passing: the mistakes and even capitulation are attributed to that great anonymity, the "left-progressives". These "left-progressives" are better known by their "aliases": Henderson, Potash, Gold, Empsak, Mattles, Durkin, etc. etc. Of course, many of these are Communists, and in better days acted as such. But let us grant the Communists in this "left-

progressive" lineup their wishful thinking retreats from the fearful identification of Communism and carefully restrict the following focal question: Were Gold and Potash, open Communist leaders, two of those "left-progressives"?

Williamson finds that these "left-progressives" are guilty of weaknesses and even capitulation for: "(a) the lack of unity of the Left as expressed in the vote against the lifting of the New York Council charter; some Left delegates on the Resolutions and Officers Report Committees did not sign the minority reports; the vote of such delegations as U.E., Longshore and Furniture in support of the officers report; the failure of some delegations to give floor leadership in support of the minority resolutions even though voting for them; (b) the failure to effectively grasp the initiative on some of the important issues close to the hearts of the rank and file of all unions and exposing the role of Murray, Reuther and Roene; (c) allowing Murray to misuse the issue of organizing the unorganized as a medium to threaten disorganization of certain smaller Progressive Internationals and to try and take away the established record of the Left Progressive unions as amongst the foremost in organizing the unorganized; and (d) failure to show in simple and convincing enough terms how the Marshall Plan affects adversely--through wage cuts, speedup, increased taxes, layoffs, regimentation of trade unions, etc.--the American workers and people."

So, by merely naming the "left-progressives" responsible--and their names are incontestably in the record--we find that the CP and its closest associates are responsible. This, Williamson cannot say; he prefers not to damn Williamson. In the same article, Williamson damns the secession experiment in N. Y.--in a carefully generalized statement: "Proposals that lead away from the fight to remain in the CIO and restore it to the membership and progressive policies are unsound, contrary to the present interests of the members and do not correspond to an exact estimate at this moment of the overall situation in the labor movement." (Turning Point's emphasis)

Here again, who but the Williamsons, the Dennises and the Fosters gave the guidance and the go ahead signal for the secession of the locals of the RWDSWU in N.Y? Even in the above quote the following words indicate a little leak in the dike for future use: "at this moment". The secessions in N.Y. were a desperate effort to retain lucrative jobs and power, a frenzied reaction to recent losses in the NMU and impending ones in the TWU. It was a wild experiment which is momentarily braked by the CP leadership because secession "does correspond to an exact estimate at this moment..." But hereafter...?

Towards the end of his analysis Williamson emphasizes: "This lack--some forces." Outright capitulation! Which known Communist, under National Committee orders did this? Was it Gold? Potash? Or--but the rest perhaps, cannot accurately be called Communists because they may or may not have been converted to "left-progressivism" at recent ceremonies on the ninth floor.

George Morris was assigned a routine job of tirelessly repeating

one idea: "The Portland Convention of the CIO should dispel completely any lingering illusions that its top leadership still expresses the more progressive wing of American labor." Towards the close of these repetitions we find: "Illusions even retarded some of the left forces. This accounted for some division among them and hesitations." Again, to whom does Morris refer--to which "left-progressives"? A short excursion into past Morris columns will reveal Morris as a main source of exactly this illusion. (We have documented this in previous issues.) As late as the opening of the CIO Convention, Morris found it still possible to have unity with Murray forces. This kind of doubletalk appears after every CPUSA-manufactured disaster, and the Party membership is still not wise to the technique.

In a supposedly militant statement by the ILWU, proudly included in the Supplement, we find: "We fully support all actions of our delegates to the CIO Convention." This means that the ILWU endorses its delegate's support for the Marshall Plan Officer's Report. So, exactly what is the D.W. gloating about?

Included in the Supplement is a routine squeak from the Fur and Leather Workers in which UNITY is striven for--including unity with the ADA "in support of the legislative demands unmistakably favored at the polls". Evidently, Foster's "Unity-Or Else" theme continues. Unity--or else the cruel need to fight militantly for the correct principles in defense of the American working class. The CPUSA leadership continues to chose their completely fraudulent unity. Today, in the CIO, the CPUSA leadership misuses the word unity. What we need is the open struggle to split the membership of the CIO away from its reactionary leaders. In this way we can achieve some real unity in the labor movement. There is no unity in unity with splitters, raiders and Murraymen.

The D.W. has on recent occasions explained the retreats of the "left-progressives" by their numerical weakness. But this is a hoax--even as witnessed by George Morris, reporting from Portland in the D.W. of Nov. 28, '48: "In all, these unions represent well over a million, or nearly a fourth of the membership of the CIO". This is considerable strength. It is mentioned in the course of proving the "left-progressive's good points. It is neglected in the course of blaming retreats on weakness of forces. (Not so long ago, the left had a hell of a lot more. Once, the Communists built the CIO--but all that has been systematically squandered.)

The D.W. Supplement was a complete misrepresentation--a paper panorama which had very little life at the Convention and which exists only for the consolation and "mental health" of worried D.W. readers.

The right is yanking the CIO down the drain; the left is clearing the pipes to prove cooperation and respectability. And yet the American workers continue to strike militantly--spontaneously. These spontaneous actions are consciously watered down either by the vicious right or the cautious left. Now, union frames brother union, locks out brother union, and hands brother union on a platter to the boss. The American workers should take a lesson from the current butchering of the UOPWA. Did the capitalists smash UOPWA? Hell, no. The NMU locks out



its UOPWA workers--and says besides, you have to sign the T-H affidavits. The TWU locks them out. And the ACWA prepares to do the same. The Great Lakes Insurance strikers in Detroit send Murray a wire which said, in part: "Your statements of last Monday about our union the UOPWA is being used by the Company against us. This morning on its windows the Company posted a blown up photostat of press reports of your remarks. As you can see this is being used to break our strike." The Murraymen are happy about these developments, but the main blame does not rest with them. The UOPWA was once one of the advanced, militant unions in America. It has sold itself short; its Communist leaders, among the hackiest in creation, have been as ruthless as Murray against internal criticism.

Some of the victims of the UOPWA leadership were Communists who warned of the current UOPWA fate and were expelled from the CP and "tabooed" within the union. Even those found associating with these Communists were given the Murray "treatment". Today, the rank and file Communists of the UOPWA are suffering the same shock suffered by their comrades in the UAW, the NLU, the TWU, etc. America is littered with union wreckage, resulting from the wreckage of the CPUSA. It's about time for rank and file Communists (and non-Party people who often are more advanced than the current variety of American Communist) to have their say. It's about time for them to stop the great Dennis-Foster retreat, and the Murray-Reuther advance.

The last three CIO Conventions have marked the increasing betrayal of the American workers and the increased degradation of the "kidnapped" revolutionary movement in the U.S. The Portland Convention hit the bottom, it would seem, and from here on, one might "hope", the situation would surely improve. This would be a happy note to hope on if it were not for the firm conviction of the National Committee that there is no bottom to "Unity--Or Else".

\* \* \*

DEFIANCE BY COMPLIANCE?--  
A Letter From A UOPWA Member

Dear Comrades of Turning Point:

November 1948

Here are some facts on the selling of the Taft-Hartley Affidavits to the membership of Local 16, United Office and Professional Workers.

A special meeting of Local 16 was held on Nov. 10, 1948 to hear reports of the discussion and decisions of a meeting of the UOPWA General Executive Board, dealing with total collective bargaining policy and activity. Hy Denerstein, Local 16 Business Administrator, read the resolution of the General Executive Board.

A few quotes from the GEB Resolution will shed a little light on the current UOPWA handsprings. In deciding to comply with the T-H affidavits, the GEB throws the blame as follows: "The situation facing our members has been aggravated by the cannibal raiding activities first of the CIO United Paperworkers and other CIO unions, and of the shameful, infamous collusion between the AFL and various employers in

... order to sell the members of our Union into company union slavery."

In a word, the UOPWA is being raided, and therefore, we are supposed to comply with the T-H Affidavits. But, in a recent referendum, the UOPWA membership decided that this reasoning was hocus and ditched the affidavits. Therefore, the GEB Resolution painfully states: "The referendum of the membership, although it reaffirmed the policy of our Union, showed a large minority were for compliance." A large minority! Since when does a large minority refute a majority. But, in any case, this is a lie. That referendum turned down compliance by a vote of 6 to 1. Of this, the Resolution "neglects" to remind us. Is the UOPWA afraid of militant support; does it have to water down the reaffirmation of its own past policies?

But wait! The Resolution suddenly says, April Fool: "There can be no illusions. Compliance or any other retreat in the face of employer attack can get little for us." This might certainly indicate that the UOPWA, having so affirmed, would not comply. But the UOPWA does comply. It defines the fool and then acts the fool.

"We cannot allow the Taft-Hartley Board, the employers, and boot-licking AFL organizations to deprive our members of their right to collective bargaining." Therefore, all we subdued sheep must conclude that succumbing to the T-H affidavits prevents the T-H forces from winning their fight against us.

After much of this political teasing, the GEB takes a deep breath and sobs: "We, therefore, propose:-(1) That the International Union authorizes the officers to take such steps as may be necessary to assure the union a place on the ballot and the right of intervention in any NLRB proceedings where this may be necessary to protect the interests of our members." (My emphasis) This is so shamefaced; the GEB could not bear, at this point, to use the bitter phrase "comply with the T-H Affidavits". But with the aid of a professional befuddler, compliance with the T-H affidavits is condensed into "such steps".

One might almost hopefully say: there!--it doesn't mean comply! But, towards the end of the document we read: "That no local union shall comply except upon written permission of the International Union!" And so the great feat is done. The leaders, who do not merit the name Communist, have managed to swear to the boss that they are not Communists. All that is needed for a poetic finale is an accurate prophecy of the results of such maneuvers. And even that the GEB gives us: "This GEB takes this step in solemn understanding of the tremendous dangers facing our Union as a result of this decision." No truer words were ever spoken--and on the scene of the crime.

This Resolution was passed in the GEB with 5 abstentions. John Stanley, Sec'y Treasurer of the National Union, resigned (for obvious reasons). The positions of three Vice-Presidents were left vacant (for obvious reasons). An amendment to the constitution eliminating these positions was proposed by the GEB. A union referendum on this was to have taken place in a few days, but has not to date. A new position of Director of Organization of the national union was created for John

Stanley (for obvious reasons). John Stanley was then appointed to this post. I am afraid that such naive reshuffling will fool none but the lowly hearts who reshuffle. A ruling or two by an NLRB Board will sweep Stanley and his new office back into the affidavit sphere. Or, worse yet, a new T-H Law replacement will write such provisions clearly into law.

Now, let us consider the next step. A local 16 Resolution "On Taft-Hartley Compliance" was read by Hy Denerstein, Administrator. The Local 16 Resolution was a true son of its father, the GEB Resolution. "We, the membership of Local 16, reaffirm our opposition to the Taft-Hartley Law and all its phases." Then: "As members fully cognizant of the needs of our National Union, we understand the reasoning, but deplore the necessity for the GEB's actions in recommending the filing of affidavits by the International Union with the Taft-Hartley Labor Board." (The sentence immediately following did not appear on the mimeographed resolution passed out at the meeting. It was only introduced by the leadership as "an omission" during discussion when the membership insisted on knowing exactly whose compliance with the affidavits they were endorsing--GEB or Local 16.) "We will not stand in the way of those major sections of our International Union who are facing immediate labor Board elections which can be used as an instrument to smash their present ability to struggle for their collective bargaining needs. Those who depend on compliance in order to secure a place on a Taft-Hartley ballot as the solution to their collective bargaining struggles are in error. Victories will be won only through intensification of a united struggle against the employers who seek to destroy us." (My emphasis)

Can one blame the members of Local 16 for confusion after such spine twisting acrobatics? We say we won't touch any angle of the T-H Law; we understand why the GEB has to affidavitize but we're sorry it had to; we won't get in the way of that major part of our union which has to sign or be smashed; we don't believe that they have to sign for successful collective bargaining--you win by a good stiff fight. (We will; we won't; we will; we won't!)

To throw the whole shebang into confusion the Resolution adds: "We pledge ourselves to this struggle and reaffirm the position of Local 16 not to comply." In other words: to comply is wrong; we support the GEB compliance because it has to; but we don't think anyone has to!

The discussion which followed was painful to witness. The membership could not get straightforward answers to simple questions. They could not even finagle out of the leadership exactly what they were about to vote on, or how the two resolutions affected each other. They could not even discover the real position of their leaders. The confusion in this case is heightened by the generally known fact that all the above advice comes from the National Committee of the CPUSA.

The membership opposes all this baloney because they know better, but they don't know how to fight their own leaders. A former worker at the NMU insisted that we should not "deplore the necessity for the

GEB's actions"; we should condemn those actions. He said he preferred "dying on his feet to living on his knees". His unwelcome preference was answered later (see below). Other "convinced" members aped the explanation in vogue for the evening: "I am against compliance for Local 16 but I understand the GEB's reasons for putting forward their proposals. Workers in insurance and motion picture locals still think that through legality they can get their demands, and we must let them find out for themselves that they will gain nothing by compliance with T-H. They will have to learn the hard way, and then they will see that only united actions against the bosses will get them their demands."

According to this reasoning, we would educate our union via the fullest compliance, educate it into a boss' trap of neverending legalities. It has not occurred to such legal sisters how, having become firmly enmeshed in legalities, and having thereby seen the light, how they disentangle themselves "legally"--how they unsign the "educational" affidavits. They would probably start by dissipating more union energies and finances in more court battles entailing the right to unsign affidavits after a given period of T-H enlightenment.

One member related what a Local 65 (Wholesale and Warehouse Workers Union) shop, out on strike, had done when its employer, with his heart set on another union, had won the right to an NLRB election. Since Local 65 was not on the ballot, the workers voted no on the other unions, continued their strike and won their demands. Such straightforward union methods were not smooth enough for the taste of the UOPWA leaders, however.

John Stanley, the new Director of Organization, late in the meeting, spoke for over an hour, after which the audience began to dribble out. He reprimanded himself for backing the CIO "non-interference" resolution at the '46 Convention. He gave his personal reasons for abstaining on the GEB resolution and resigning his position. He said he would never sign the T-H affidavits because he felt that individual demonstrations must be made against any acquiescence to the T-H Law. He did not explain why, in removing himself from a position of recorded guilt, he could acquiesce to the GEB's passing of the Resolution and his replacement by another leader who would acquiesce.

Stanley warned that with the nearness of the elections in insurance and screen, we could not allow that part of our membership involved to fall into the hands of the right wing and racketeering AFL unions. If we lost those locals, we would no longer have national scope as a union. We must not make the mistake of the German workers who retreated continuously until their unions were wiped out. He likened the UOPWA's present retreat to the justified retreat of an army. The question was not whether to die on one's feet (as a member had suggested) when you could retreat and regroup your forces for the victorious blow against the enemy. If the enemy were beating you over the head with clubs it would be wiser to avoid sure death and retreat to get a helmet to protect your head in order to continue the battle. (Brother Stanley did not discuss the various types of helmet to choose from.)

Stanley failed to explain why he was switching offices. Was it to avoid the responsibility of signing the T-H affidavits? Since he had so nobly argued against retreat, what were his feelings about his successor signing the affidavits for him and retreating for him? In keeping with Stanley's criticism of the German workers, one wonders how long the UOPWA can continue to retreat. In Germany, the Communist Party fought against this retreat and suffered great casualties. In the UOPWA, the Communist Party orders retreat--and suffers casualties anyway. On the other hand, if this is a period of retreat, Stanley should have specified those factors which prove this point. As for the need to combat raiding, the example of the Local 65 shop related from the floor is an eloquent answer. One could add the recent case of the Maritime elections on the Great Lakes where attempts to raid NMU contracts fell through in the same way. (Not that the NMU drew the obvious lesson from this; it did the opposite and hollered for compliance as the UOPWA is doing.)

The real answer to the raiding argument is that no union with the respect and support of its membership can be raided. The raiding union cannot steal the membership from below because the workers simply stick by the union of their choice; they can't raid from above (by a deal with the boss and the aid of the courts and boards) because the union defeats these actions as it defeats any anti-union actions--by using its working class power to strike, etc. Union raiding is nothing new in the American Labor movement. The AFL spent a good part of its history attempting to raid instead of attempting to organize. No legalities ever really protected a union from raiding; it protected itself by treating raiders as scabs.

Bob Freeman, Commercial Division Organizer, offered a variation on the same theme. He felt that Local 16 should not comply. He also felt that insurance and screen workers would gain nothing by complying--it would not improve collective bargaining. But he was not at this time prepared to say to hell with the members of Insurance and Screen just because they did not understand as much as Local 16. Even in Local 16, he pointed out, there was a questioning of non-compliance (not by a "large minority", we hope). He was sure that by coming out on the picket lines and giving donations, Local 16 could show Insurance and Screen that the battle could be won only by united struggle. Of course, Freeman also was for both Resolutions.

Jack Greenspan, Direct Mail organizer, went through the same routine. He added the tidbit that Local 16 had fought the right wing with its ideas of compliance and other reactionary ideas and had won. It was only because UOPWA had to get on the ballot for the NLRB elections that compliance was necessary.

Winifred Norman, Trade Union Division organizer offered the same. The audience was still leaving. A TWU office worker said we were fooling ourselves by complying and capitulating to the bosses.

Norma Aronson, President of Local 16, gave a memorable performance. During the discussion, the following question had repeatedly come up: if Local 16 votes non-compliance and the national union

votes compliance, will Local 16 have to comply finally, anyway? Aronson answered, No.

I wouldn't be too sure. There are recent NLRB rulings to the effect that under the T-H Law, the national office of a union is responsible for the actions of its local agents. Insofar as local noncompliance contradicts national compliance, it is conceivable that without shedding a tear, the NLRB could consider the compliance incomplete and void. This could be used both ways: a local's compliance could be considered incomplete since it wasn't part of a uniform national compliance. This is the technical aspect. But, more important, if noncompliance is so important to Local 16, a national compliance certainly knocks the morale and support right out from under this important local. Certainly, it isn't logical for the leading local of a union to encourage a wrong policy which undermines its correct policy. Obviously behind all this is the cold realization in the Local 16 leadership that all this is but the diplomatic prelude to Local 16's future compliance--having been forced by the trend in the Union.

"Speaking as a Communist", Aronson said that she could not force her ideas down the workers throats; she could only help and fight for them. (Hear! Hear!) She found that there were unions which had not complied that work for the bosses, so it didn't matter whether they complied or not. Joe Curran, she said, doesn't have to sign because the bosses are glad to work with him since he works against the members. (Aronson is not up on her news. Curran, who certainly does work for the bosses, was as eager as the UOPWA leaders to Taft-Hartley-ize himself and the union. He shoved through compliance with about as little democracy as the UOPWA--using their same reasons--raiding, etc. This is some justification for capitulation, given by one who unfortunately is assigned to flaunt her bad variety of fake Communism. Aronson said that, working during the Screen emergency, members had come to her, asking that the union comply so that the Screen members would not have to vote for IATSE or no union. They assured her that they were not trying to get rid of UOPWA officers that way! Their only reason was that the bosses said they'd negotiate if the union signed the affidavits. Aronson seemed to approve.

I suppose the principle behind this is compliance with the T-H affidavits in order to comply with the boss--in order to fight the boss?

So the doubletalk went on all evening. By the time the vote was taken a third of the attendance, at least, had left. Those who were left still weren't sure exactly what they were voting on, Local 16 compliance, GEB compliance--or any variation thereof. The resolution was passed with numerous abstentions which seemed to indicate a lack of opportunity to vote on a clearcut issue, and general dissatisfaction with the whole tenor of the meeting.

There have been many fancy reasons given by various unions for compliance with the T-H affidavits but none so fancy as UOPWA's capitulation to a "large (6 to 1) minority".

As the GEB resolution stated "in solemn understanding", there are "tremendous dangers facing our union as a result of this decision." If the left unions are going to retreat from substantial majorities in some cases and from large minorities in others, from what or whom and when aren't we going to retreat?

Unfortunately, the UOPWA will have to learn the hard way, all over again, how to fight. Meanwhile, we all will suffer for our leadership's betrayal.

Comradely,

UOPWA Member in N.M.U.

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STILL STUCK WITH KNICKERBOCKER AND DAVIS--  
A Letter from a CCNY Student

Dear Comrades:

December 1948

We find today that most of the spontaneous, militant actions of the people are wasted because they have no real leadership. The "leadership" is always bogged down by legalisms and by an inability to carry through those actions initiated by the people. The sit-down strike at City College is a good example of this.

Here is some background on what happened up to the time of the strike. Prof. Knickerbocker, chairman of the Romance Language Dept. at CCNY, has been the subject of investigations for 18 years. He was charged with anti-Semitism by some teachers at the college. The college faculty committee cleared him. Later, he was accused of discriminating against a Jewish student. The N.Y. City Council found him guilty of both in the summer of 1948.

Davis was administrator of Army Hall (men's dormitory). Last semester he was found guilty of segregating Negro and white students in the dormitories, removed as administrator by Pres. Wright but kept as an economics teacher.

On the first day of the term, Hillel (Jewish campus organization) distributed a report of the proceedings and recommendations of the N.Y. City Council investigation. That day, one of Knickerbocker's classes walked out and requested that it be transferred to another teacher. The dean refused to do this. A few days later some students walked out of Davis' classes.

Progressive groups on campus began to circulate petitions demanding the ouster of Knickerbocker and Davis. The Board of Higher Education announced a hearing on the Knickerbocker case. A resolution stating that Student Council send to the hearing representatives who would demand Knickerbocker and Davis's ouster, was defeated. Instead, Student Council voted to send "observers". This surprised no one since it is well known that Student Council is mostly composed of students with big ambitions. The S. C. previously refused to accept the available voluminous research gathered during years of investigation,

and had, instead, decided that it would "start all over again" and investigate for itself because it was "in a position to be unbiased." It had completely ignored the Davis case after he was removed as administrator of Army Hall.

The night of the BHE hearings, Students for Wallace (YPA), AYD, and some other groups picketed the meeting and demanded an open hearing. The BHE refused to allow them inside. The next morning, the papers reported that the BHE had cleared Knickerbocker of all charges. That day AYD distributed a leaflet on campus which told the students to "protest." How? "Phone Ordway Tead" (Chairman of the BHE).

The CPUSA leadership has succeeded in instilling one of its ideas, at least, into the minds of too many AYD'ers: If you've tried Petitions, if you've tried Post-cards, as a last resort, you can always Phone. This is known as the Theory of the Three Revolutionary P's. Fortunately, although the AYD was paralyzed by the CPUSA "leadership", and could only suggest phone calls, the students of City College were not and could think of more militant action. The fact is that the "advanced" AYD tailed the "backward" student body.

The next day, 1000-1200 students went on a sit-down strike. I wonder whether AYD leaders remembered their leaflet which certainly seemed ludicrous now, especially if you were sitting on the floor of Lincoln Corridor and watching hundreds of students "instructing" the College Administration.

The strike was attacked by Student Councilites as "mob violence," a "lynch mob" etc. A battle of ideas took place right on the floor of Lincoln Corridor. We got a regular barrage of speakers from Student Council who retreated gradually and then squeaked, "You just aren't using the right tactics, but we all want the same thing. But the strike was solid as long as we were sitting down.

Most progressives felt that the strike was amazing--to put it mildly. To Communists, it must have been doubly so since the strike was spontaneous. The very slight preparation came principally from some non-Communists who decided the night before to call for a "demonstration" at 11 A.M. The campus first heard of this demonstration at 11 A.M. of the same day when some students shouted the announcement. Fifteen minutes later, 100 students were sitting down in Lincoln Corridor. The number of strikers soon grew to 1200.

The fact that the strike was spontaneous is certainly not to the credit of Communists who should have had some perspective and plans based on the rapid succession of events since the start of the semester. It is rather to the credit of the students. Had not some students initiated the action, the Party group would have continued to offer petitions. It is important to remember that a "strike committee" did not call the strike. There was no such committee. There were only angry students. The strike committee came later.

During the strike, when some students suggested that this was the time to recruit people into "Students for Wallace", "communists" in the organization opposed this because "we should keep the strike non-partisan". This reminds one of the Party's distinction in union strikes--always the first to deny that the strike is political.

Student Council leaders grew more "friendly" as the strike went on, invited us to the SC rally called for the next day and even permitted us to have our own speakers there. The strike continued all day and night until 12 noon, the next day, when



we all marched to the rally in Great Hall. SC of course denounced the strike and attempted to prevent all action at this meeting. But the body of 2500 students voted (1) to oust Knickerbocker and Davis and (2) to meet and strike next week if the students of Knickerbocker and Davis's classes were not permitted to transfer.

Frightened by this, the SC President suddenly and illegally adjourned the meeting and pulled out the Public Address system so that we could not continue the meeting. This was done just as a resolution was about to be offered stating that we would strike if Knickerbocker and Davis were not ousted by next week. At this point, we should have immediately marched back to Lincoln Corridor and continued the strike, but the strike leaders told us to go home and come back to the rally next week.

The next day, Friday, at the SC executive meeting, they demanded a referendum on the decisions made at the Great Hall meeting. It claimed that these decisions were unrepresentative because (1) "outsiders" were present and voted. (These "outsiders" were Evening Session students and about 3 YPA'ers from other colleges.) (2) A majority of students were not present; only 2,500 voted. This is ridiculous since the SC Pres. was just elected by 1,400 votes, a high vote in a SC election. The motion was passed and the referendum was called for Wednesday, when the students were returning to school after a two-day holiday. In this way, the students were notified of the referendum and asked to vote on the same day.

The tactics of the progressives played right into the hands of SC and the College Administration which wished of course to break the strike. Progressives say that it would have been "undemocratic" to oppose the referendum that gave the majority of the student body a chance to voice its opinion. With the strike called for Thursday, it was they who demanded that the referendum be held on Wednesday because they did not want the strike stalled.

It is understandable that a referendum be held on the question of ousting Knickerbocker and Davis. But by what law is it required that students may strike only with the permission of the rest of the student body. Certainly, not by any previous college strikes. A group of students has the right to protest and walk out of classes at any time. The rest of the student body voices its opinion by its support or non-support of the strike.

Was it "democratic" to hold a referendum on the strike question without even one day's notice to the student body? Or just foolish--from the striker's point of view? Again, why should we have had to listen to the dictates of a Student Council which opposed our strike, and sent spies to take down the names of strikers. Do unions agree to elections whenever the bosses feel like having them? This was our strike and we handed over the leadership to Student Council.

Of course, as most of us suspected, Pres. Wright and the Administration were not simply going to sit by and wait for another strike to occur on Thursday. In fact, their henchmen at SC were openly giving away the plans. They said that Wright was going to transfer Knickerbocker's students. Progressives thought that he would do this because the strike resolution had stated (and this was a bad mistake) that we would strike if the students were not permitted to transfer--and nothing else. Over the long holiday weekend, Pres. Wright did just this. He was forced to, as the NY Star said--with the threat of a strike hanging over him. This made a farce of the strike resolution on which the students were to vote. Only students who voted on a point of principle could vote yes to show that they were prepared to strike for their demands.

The vote on striking was defeated, approximately 3,000 to 1,800. The motion to oust Knickerbocker and Davis was passed. Why? The question was "loaded" inasmuch as the resolution stated that we strike if the students were not permitted to transfer and they had already been permitted to transfer. (A student of aristotelian logic would have to vote no). The strike had been viciously attacked by SC. Any student who had not heard these attacks before, heard them upon his return to school Wednesday morning. A leaflet put out by what called itself "The Student Liberals Committee --composed of the S.C. Exec., Students for Democratic Action, Young Republicans, Youth for Norman Thomas, SLID--Trotskyites, etc.--told students, "Mass Action is Undemocratic," and said that we could oust Knickerbocker and Davis by "legal methods". Therefore, it advised students to vote NO on the strike resolution. The reactionary school newspaper "Campus" said the same thing.

But--there was not one leaflet that really answered these arguments, nothing to prove that only the strike would oust Knickerbocker and Davis. If the students had realized this they could have done nothing else but vote for the strike. Actually, the effectiveness of the strike was proven by the fact that it had forced Pres. Wright to transfer the students. Before this, the Administration had refused even to discuss the cases, but the strike frightened the "boys" so much that they were "willing to talk"--only to stall of course and get us up and off from the floor. Even the BHE has been forced to publish a white paper defending its position on Knickerbocker.

"Free and Equal" a one-page paper put out by the strike committee over the weekend, had as its front page headline, "STUDENT VOTE CAN OUST TWO BIGOTS". On top of this it distributed a crosseyed leaflet which asked students to "keep your eye on the issue. If keeping one's eye on the issue meant determining how we could kick out Knickerbocker and Davis, and if volumes and years of research, protests, picket lines petitions, phone calls, meetings, etc. had not succeeded in doing this, then neither would a vote. The vote, like the petition, would go in the waste basket. So although we had originally gone on strike because we had tried all other ways, the strike committee was now taking "one step forward and two steps backward" by claiming that a vote could oust Knickerbocker and Davis. (Today, although a majority did vote in this referendum to oust them, they still remain.)

All these leaders knew, and said to each other, that the referendum was a maneuver of student council--to detract attention from the strike and get us back to petitions, investigations, courts and taxpayer's suits (with which they are busying themselves now). But, the students, thought our leaders, would never understand that the referendum was a maneuver!" What a snobbish attitude this betrays! If we cannot be honest with the students then we are no better than the phony politicians in S.C. We should have exposed the S.C.'s finking role and the referendum for what it was.

"Strike until we oust Knickerbocker and Davis" should have been our slogan. The strike originally had a clear "demand" as its basis: oust Knickerbocker and Davis for anti-Negro, anti-Jewish discrimination. That's why the students struck. The demand for transfers was subordinate to the ouster demand and should have been kept that way. The Administration, working through the S.C. and aided by the naive, self-destructive "ifs" of the strike leadership, successfully deflected the main thrust of the strike into the "Strike if the transfers are not granted" proposition. When the strike leadership itself posed the question this way, unwittingly, the Administration was too glad to oblige, permit the transfers and destroy the motive force of the strike. The Administration could clearly understand that trading a small defeat (transfers) for a large victory (strike fizzle) was in the best tradition of warfare.

Reduced to an absurdity (which of course was not clear to students in the rushed referendum) the Administration said: (1) We permit the transfers; (2) now vote no on the proposition of "strike if the transfers are refused".

Actually, the winning of transfers was originally a clear victory due to "impolite" striking, but this victory was transferred into a weapon against the strike. The strikers who started with an initiative and determination which panicked the Administration, should never have given up that initiative for absurd truces, waiting periods which involved the demoralizing phenomenon of stopping and restarting the strike. Stop and go strikes always suffer from rundown batteries. The strikers should have realized the very partial character of the rushed referendum--and not helped rush it more. In fact, the strike committee had nothing to gain from the referendum. The proof of its support was the panicky granting of transfers by the Administration. I cannot understand the pseudo-liberal reasoning which went on (projected by so-called Communists, in many cases) that it is undemocratic for only 1800 students (i.e. less than a majority) to strike.

We lost because instead of taking the initiative, we waited for Student Council to pull the strings and then jumped, always on the defensive. The Communists (very poor Communists) who took part in the leadership of the strike are to blame for the fact that it was smashed. The students who voted against the strike limited themselves to "legal methods" and perhaps realize today that they gagged and bound themselves, that the Administration is happy and secure as long as we continue to petition. Many of the Communists, involved in the strike, were hardworking and honest; but because they were blinded by the legalisms of the National Committee of the CP, they helped mislead the students.

A Communist makes mistakes but it is his duty to honestly admit, analyze and correct them. I have heard many non-Communists discuss frankly and intelligently the mistakes made during the strike. However, certain Communist leaders on campus who give some very quiet lipservice to this discussion prove that they do not realize their mistakes by their present actions. While progressives have not given up the idea of another strike to oust Knickerbocker and Davis, these Communists either refuse to commit themselves or even condemn talk of another strike, play pussy in the corner and speak vaguely of "involving the broad masses of students" in actions to oust Knickerbocker and Davis. They hanker for the three P's.

I think that most Party members do wish to fight like real Communists but are weakened and confused by the National Committee and D.W. policy of retreat. In the same way, honest progressives are misled and confused by Communists, although they have shown themselves to be more vigilant, militant and willing to admit their mistakes, and usually more radical. I think that if Communists want to gain the respect and trust of the students, if they do not want to repeat their mistakes, and if they want to counteract the current demoralization on the campus, they must be openminded and honest, willing to admit and discuss their mistakes--then correct them. This self-criticism must come not when it is already too late as the National Committee of the CP always manages to do, but now when the mistakes can still be corrected and we can win our fight to oust the fascists from CUNY faculty.

Comradely,

A student at CUNY

P.S. The unprincipled tactics of the National Committee managed to corrupt some of the Party members at CUNY. When a non-Communist, who was running on the progressive slate in Student Council election expressed agreement with the issue of TP on

the Progressive Party, Communists and others were ordered not to vote for him because he was a member of the PR Club.

By these underhanded tactics, they make anti-Communists out of good progressives. They have attempted to keep the matter quiet and have even admitted their "mistakes", but it is already too late. The current greeting among non-Communists in on the story is "oh, hello, are you a member of the PR Club?"

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YOUTHFUL DIALECTICS ON THE NINTH FLOOR--  
YCL to AYD to YCL

A really remarkable document has come to our attention, the epitome of confusion and contradiction, appropriate for the burial of that unfortunate Browderite stillbirth, the American Youth for Democracy. This document, a post-election statement by the National Board of the AYD, declares in part:

"We hoped to be able to propose for club discussion and referendum a plan for the AYD to join with others right after the elections in the launching of a Marxist youth organization. In our joint consultations, (with Communist youth leaders) however, it was agreed that the actual formation of this organization should not be recommended and undertaken as an immediate project..."

"We call on every club to endorse the objective of a Marxist youth organization. Further, we believe that because the founding of such an organization will not take place at this time, a variety of forms should be developed locally..."

It elaborates its position with the information that "there has been a general strengthening of the democratic youth movement" and "there emerged the Communist Party youth and student clubs" and concludes:

"As a result of these new developments the AYD is no longer the lone progressive, anti-fascist youth organization--a place it occupied for many years. In fact, the AYD has become organizationally weakened to a point where it exists today in only three or four states and has functioning clubs on a few campuses. It has become increasingly difficult for the AYD to develop a rounded program of activities and to maintain itself financially..."

"It is the opinion of the National Board, that the AYD cannot continue as a national organization. The National Board strongly recommends that every existing AYD club consider maintaining itself in a local capacity as a club, study circle or forum for Marxist education of its members and other young people in the communities and on the campus--to work closely with Communist party youth clubs and Marxist societies on the campuses."

We are thus informed that the strengthening of the democratic youth movement and the emergence of CP youth clubs were climaxed by the weakening of the AYD. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the building of a Marxist youth organization, the AYD does not propose to combine organizationally with other interested groups, but instead it proposes to disintegrate nationally and organizationally.

A strange kind of advance. And yet, that is what AYD members are told--that this step is an advance. Yes, it is the CFUSA type of advance utilised shortly

before and during the war in the dissolution of every type of progressive organization, from the American Youth Congress to the American Student Union and climaxed by the "advance" of the Young Communist League into the AYD. All these advances foreshadowed the liquidation of the CPUSA in 1944 into the Communist Political Assn.

All of these liquidationist advances were proposed in the name of broader unity against fascism, and then, to win the war. They were justified by the argument that the CP and YCL were becoming isolated. The CPUSA finally became isolated from itself via the Browder dissolution. And since that time, it has become isolated from the working class and the youth by its own redbaiting, by its lack of faith in the working class, by its deals with Social Democracy which finally transformed it into Social Democracy.

Why does the AYD dissolve leaving the fragments to fend for themselves? Why is the AYD so very weak? Surely, it is not logical to believe that the strengthening of the democratic youth movement, and the added support of the CP youth clubs weakens a progressive youth organization. On Dec. 15, 1948 the AYD did go out of existence on a national scale, and one student AYD of CUNY issued the most melancholy leaflet to explain this and announce that it would "remain for a while."

"AYD couldn't attract Marxists or non-Marxists to an organization that was only partly Marxist. AYD was caught in the middle. In addition the red-baiting hysteria has drawn away many of our financial backers and AYD is now in an impossible financial situation."

We wonder what the students thought of this. Since when do militant organizations dissolve for lack of financial backers? What sort of red-bait-able financial backers did AYD depend on? Or didn't the AYD know that real fighting organizations can live on guts if they must. What kind of helpless explanation is this -- to declare that we are "caught in the middle"? In the middle of exactly what was the AYD? The fact that it could not attract "Marxists" or "non-Marxists" indicates that it was caught in the middle of the CP National Committee's doubletalk on the youth question. Progressive organizations, unlike old soldiers are not supposed to "fade away." They are supposed to grow, combine, or in some way develop to a higher level.

Perhaps the CP can solve the mystery. Robert Thompson, in his report on "The Party's Work Among the Youth" to the 14th Nat'l Convention of the CPUSA, Aug. 2 - 6, 1948, declared that the CP youth should counteract "certain harmful liquidationist tendencies with regard to the AYD, tendencies rapidly to scrap this organization..." "The AYD certainly has a very important rôle to play, if the Communists within it work properly, in providing a broad base for the formation of the projected Marxist youth organization." (Political Affairs, September 1948, p. 915)

And Betty Gannett in her main report "Win the Youth" states: "Any tendency to bypass the AYD, or to allow it to disappear by neglect, would seriously impair the progress toward anti-fascist unity, seriously weaken the objectives to be fulfilled in the 1948 elections, and weaken the base for a new Marxist youth organization." (*Ibid.*, p. 929)

It would appear that the 1948 election was the last scene in "The AYD" tragedy. In August, the CPUSA was breathing promethean fire into that near corpse. By December, Leon Wofsy and the Nat'l Board of AYD were asking: Why is this ghost still walking around? The CUNY leaflet quoted above is a good example of what has

happened to the premature ghost of the AYD. You may be sure, however, that no amount CP technological improvements (destruction of mass organizations) can throw our professional job-holders out of "work."

The last step is the "withering away" of the AYD on the campus, its dissolving into the Marxist Cultural Society. And so the process is complete -- only "renegades" will remember how the future Marxist youth organization was "built".

How was the AYD built down to its present consumptive state? The American Youth for Democracy was organized in 1943 through the dissolution of the Young Communist League in order to form a broad youth organization. The justification for this was the success of the young Communists in France and other countries in building broad non-Party ~~Marxist~~ youth organizations together with young Socialists and other non-Party youth. Woe to him who protested that such conditions did not exist in this country. "Other" organizations were supposed to join with the YCL in forming this new organization, but it was never quite clear what these "others" were.

As a super-duper bond-selling organization during the war, the AYD reached its height, which was still way below the membership of the YCL. As for education, it was for winning the war, and for democracy. It supported universal military training for the post-war period, and those who opposed this were scolded as "pessimistic." With Browder's "optimistic" outlook, it believed in a long period of post-war peaceful collaboration with the capitalists, who were evidently about to disprove Marxism-Leninism with their "sober intelligence."

As a result of the previous dissolution of the ASU, American League Against War and Fascism, and the YCL, the AYD was the only progressive youth organization left in the country. As such it should have encompassed all those who formerly belonged or would have belonged to the now defunct organizations, according to the CP's theoretical plans for a united youth organization. But the American youth could not swallow the Elsie Dinsmore quality of the Browderite AYD. To top it all, the CP tried desperately to obscure the roots of the AYD: on the one hand it swore it was a good American organization (meaning non-Communist), and on the other, it gave directives to it quite openly.

After the Duclos letter, those of us who were convinced that the AYD represented Browder's little entree before gobbling up the CPUSA, felt that the dissolution of the YCL should be exposed as the liquidationist measure it was and a new YCL formed. But this subject was taboo. Not until three years after the "reconstitution" of the CPUSA, did its N.C. admit that the YCL's dissolution was a revisionist mistake, and that a new non-Party Marxist youth organization should be formed.

A Memorandum from the National Board dated Nov. 29, 1945 stated: "It is our considered opinion that a YCL should not be re-established; that this would tend to be a step backward rather than moving forward to find forms for the most effective work of the Communists among the youth."

The P.R. Club in January and then again in March 1946 instructed its delegates to the Bronx County Convention and the N.Y. State Youth Conference to call for the formation of a YCL. Numbers of letters were written by our members to Max Weiss (Nat'l Youth Director at the time). A letter, which led to the first expulsion from the P.R. Club, sent to the N.C. in June 1946, criticized the Memorandum of Nov. 1945 and the March Conference. (This letter was reprinted in the March '48 issue of SPARK. Here are some excerpts of a criticism which was rewarded by expulsion.

"It (the Memorandum) lays the basis for what is going on today - a sloppy transformation of AYD clubs into ersatz YCL's... We can't correct the error of the YCL liquidation by taking over a quick substitute... In a D.W. article entitled 'Building the Party Among the Youth', Bernie Friedlander said, 'In spite of Frederick Woltman's ravings in the World-Telegram that the AYD is a Communist front and controlled organization, the truth is that only several hundred out of several thousand AYDers in N.Y. are Communists,' and then added, 'As yet, Woltman is a liar. As yet? Is that a new form or irresponsible humor?'

"At the Party state youth conference, a little while back, Comrades who were too afraid to speak because of the atmosphere, told me what they thought. Many wanted a return of the YCL as the only instrument which would build the AYD. A few actually broke the censorship and said so... Although Comrades did not pose the YCL versus the AYD, the myth that we did was instituted to give our leadership an easier problem to tackle. Certainly Gates, Friedlander, and Wofsy had a criminal attitude, showing their approvals and disapprovals of each word uttered...

"The proper method would be to broaden the AYD by ceasing our mechanical Marxistification, and to reconstitute the YCL on the basis of the C.P. Youth Club, which is neither fish nor fowl. The Youth Club is a blind alley affair. Admittedly it is temporary. It was started as a stopgap for the YCL urge among the returning vets and others. When the time comes to 'kill it' our leadership thinks that the membership will filter into other Party clubs, but the tragedy is that too much of it will be lost in the unplanned shuffle.

"Once, after years of groping, we found the Leninist solution to the YCL problem - an independent organization with the emphasis on education. Our YCLs improved after that, only to suffer too much experimentation and finally Browderism."

And now, Robert Thompson agrees: "The dissolution of the YCL in 1943 was an important and very harmful manifestation of the revisionist line that was beginning to flower and become dominant in the policies of our Party."

"Following 1945, a serious error was made in failing to draw the conclusion that our Party should assist in the formation of an independent non-Party youth organization based on Marxism-Leninism..." (P.A. Sept. 1948, p. 913)

"Thus it was an opportunist mistake to dissolve the YCL in 1943, and a mistake not to help form a new one in 1945, after the reconstitution of the CPUSA. Well, well, do we actually have the N.C. admitting an error? That would hardly be consistent. And the N.C. is consistent on that score. For in the paragraph in between the two quoted, Thompson states: "We must put a halt in our Party to this nonsense that somehow our Party corrected its revisionist line in 1945, developed a correct Marxist-Leninist main line of policy, and yet somehow in the whole of this period, followed a revisionist line in the youth field. There is no such thing."

Yes, there is no such thing. It certainly is nonsense that it was only in the youth field that revisionism prevailed. It merely took a more obvious organizational form in the youth field. Does Thompson believe that dialectics consists of sense, nonsense, and sense: 1. the dissolution of the YCL in 1943 was a revisionist mistake; 2. it is nonsense to believe that this revisionist mistake was not corrected in 1945; and 3, a "serious error" was made in not helping to form a Marxist youth organization following 1945. We were wrong, but we were right; but we were wrong when we were right.

Betty Gannett adds to this confusion of contradictions. In the section of her report on "Lessons from the Past", we find the following analysis (3 years late):

"We tended to consider the YCL and its replacement by the AYD as merely a new approach to an old problem...it was axiomatic that the dissolution of the YCL could not be viewed in the same light as the liquidation of the Communist Party..."

"In 1943, the prerequisites did not exist for the merger of the YCL with other forces around a common program...what was involved in the action of 1943 was the liquidation of the Marxist content of the youth organization, thus abandoning the concept of the need for an independent Marxist youth organization..."

"Under these conditions the dissolution of the YCL was a revisionist error-- a product of Browder revisionism." (P.A. Sept. 1948, P. 922, 923, 924)

Like Thompson she too proves the CP always right, even when wrong. In discussing a previous report in April 1948, she declares: "...some comrades concluded that we not only continued our revisionist errors in the youth field, but, in fact, further deepened and extended revisionism. This is obviously incorrect, and, undoubtedly this false interpretation could have been drawn from my report." (p. 924)

Obviously and undoubtedly! And now we come to #3, "the negation of the negation" 9th floor style: "The developments of the past few years prove that we did not go far enough in 1945." There is a big difference, don't you see, between continuing a revisionist mistake, expelling and slandering those who criticize this, and not going "far enough". This is a 9th floor relation between quantity and quality.

Then this disciple of pragmatism proceeds to justify the demise of the AYD on the basis of "life", "experience", and "history". The reason, she declares, the AYD did not develop into a broad anti-fascist, anti-war organization is because history had not placed such a development on the order of the day. "Such a development among the youth is contingent upon similar developments among the people as a whole" (p. 925). And so when history and Henry Wallace outdistanced the CP (which was working overtime on the "prematurity" of the third party) we were able "to see more clearly what we did not see in 1945."

This is the argument that is supposed to console those AYDers who wonder at the order to dig a grave for the AYD. In spite of its bad beginning, had the AYD been allowed to develop into a broad anti-fascist organization instead of a surreptitious YCL, it could have grown. Instead it has been "caught in the middle", butchered and left to rot.

But once again the truth slips out in contradiction to alleged "experience":

"HAD WE IN 1945, OR IN THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING, PROBED MORE DEEPLY INTO EVERY PHASE OF OUR YOUTH WORK, LISTENED MORE ATTENTIVELY TO THE VOICES RAISED BELOW, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT WE WOULD HAVE MUCH SOONER, IF NOT ALREADY THEN, SEEN THE NEED FOR AN INDEPENDENT NON-PARTY MARXIST YOUTH ORGANIZATION. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT MOST OF THE COMRADES WHO RAISED THE DEMAND FOR THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE Y.C.L. WERE NOT SO MUCH CONCERNED WITH THE Y.C.L. AS SUCH, BUT CORRECTLY WANTED A YOUTH ORGANIZATION WITH MARXIST CONTENT." (p. 926).

Why you "renegade", you "left opportunist", you "semi-Trotskyite", you surely aren't supporting the PR Club? Because you're talking about comrades like us and those who dropped out of or never rejoined the CP after the war. Here is an excerpt from a letter we received from one such comrade:



"Today's report from the CP Convention made me very angry. Thompson on the youth panel says the disbanding of the YCL in '43 was revisionistic (Browderism) and that we need a new 'Marxist Leninist youth' organization. The second conclusion was accepted finally about 3 or 4 months ago, though the first one seems very new. I was personally in the fight against disbanding the YCL until I was drafted and remember the trouble I was in when I returned in '46 and fought in my club to re-establish some form of YCL. This was after John Gates had written his report to the youth panel denying not only that the original dissolution was incorrect and revisionistic, but that a new youth organization need be built. Now comes a correct about face on a theoretical level, but with almost no sign of personal criticism of the men who continually make such errors. Disgusting! How effectively will these ideas now be carried out."

What we warned and fought against in 1945 and 1946 has come about; the AYD, instead of having been built by those who spoke against the YCL, has been destroyed. In this history, we find the answer to the embarrassment of the AYD. The CP leadership is afraid to allow the AYD to openly become part of a Marxist youth organization (individual chapter exceptions perhaps allowed) for fear it would set the red-baiters off on an "I told you so" lick. They dare not admit in action that they made the mistake: YCL into AYD into YCL.

As for the building of the future "non-Party Marxist youth organization", the National Committee's main contribution is: not yet. The AYD declared that "the founding of such an organization will not take place at this time." Betty Gannett and Thompson warn that it must not be "a simple process of just giving youth cards to the young Communists in the Party." (P.A. p.915) It must bring in "other sections of the youth movement including the AYD..." And then comes Thompson's tour de force in HESITATION. He travels from Queens to Manhattan by way of the Panama Canal. We take the liberty of inserting numbered "resting stations" after each hesitation.

"In this connection, we should, I believe, think along the lines of 1 assisting, at an appropriate moment 2, in the development of 3 a proper organizing committee to prepare for 4 the formation of such an organization." (p.915)

This is INITIATIVE! LEADERSHIP! MILITANCY! YOUTHFUL DARING! The tired reader "will little note nor long remember" that after 4 "approaches", Thompson has finally "approached" the preparation stage. But generations after us will know the quote well. It will be one of the glories of inertia in the humor room of an American post-Revolution museum. It is in this stall of procrastination that the beat horse of AYD rots. At the appropriate moment, the present Party youth clubs will combine with smatterings of AYD (under any name) in the guise of "other sections of the youth movement" in a "broad" convention. This is the real reason for the dissolution of the AYD. The CPUSA expects to use its facility for hocus pocus to create "considerable forces" out of the membership-less AYD. So, once again, a change in stationery will broaden the corpse of AYD and crippled Party Youth Clubs into a new organization—whose main purpose will be to mislead the YPA in the same way that the CPUSA misleads the PP.: unprincipled coalitions, retreat, sabotage of those who do not toe the line, and general evasion of the most important problems. (See our Nov. issue, "The Future of the Progressive Party" and "A Message from Alameda County Communists", noted on last page.)

We have met too many Communists, who never had the opportunity to learn Marxism-Leninism in a real CP, who silence us with, "Lenin is dead; Lenin does not apply." On the contrary, the CPUSA leadership is dead—and does not apply. Comrades who want to fight for Socialism must learn to handle their weapon, Marxism. The special note which runs through the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin is the bitter, endless fight against opportunism.

For those sincere people who come to the CP in the hope of fighting for Socialism, the study of Marxism is the antidote for the poison of opportunism. If you want to find--exposed-- the CPUSA's role for the past 5 years, in particular, read Lenin's "What Is to Be Done". If you want to discover the type of Party <sup>that</sup> can lead the Proletarian Revolution, read Stalin's "Foundations of Leninism" and the "Short History of the CPSU(B)". We believe that if you study Marxism with an open and objective mind, if you are not afraid to criticize, if you read the expelled literature without fear or prejudice, you must come to the conclusion that the most important job for us is the building of a real Marxist Communist Party in our country.

In the new Marxist youth organization, we must fight to re-open the discussion. We must bypass the routine lipservice to the "need for study", and actually study. We must consider it a responsibility to build the YPA into the most powerful anti-war, anti-fascist youth organization in America. The YPA must be built on the fight against the Marshal Plan and against the draft. A real Young Communist League could insure this with militant, clear leadership.

We cannot seriously hope that the opportunist leadership of the CPUSA will allow the establishment of a real Young Communist League. To date, it has not even countenanced the name--YCL. The CP leadership will naturally feel impelled to create a "respectable" organization--with, perhaps, a "refined" name. The comrades who want a YCL will find that there cannot be one without a real CP. Nevertheless, let's fight for the correct principles in the forthcoming Marxist, non-Party organization. This fight will become one aspect of an ever-widening discussion leading to the establishment of a real CP. It may well be that just as membership in the YCL was once training for competent membership in the CPUSA (in our better days), so today, the fight for a real YCL will be the prelude to a fight on the part of young Communists for a real Communist Party.

Errata: Quote from Williamson, bottom of page 7, should read: "This lack of unity of the left stood out sharply in Portland, where there were both vacillation as well as outright capitulation by some forces."

SUBSCRIPTIONS: A yearly sub to Turning Point is \$1.50. TP will send you, @ \$1.00 per month, New Times, Soviet international affairs weekly; For A Lasting Peace, For A People's Democracy, bi-monthly organ of the Communist Information Bureau in Eu-charest; and Turning Point, monthly.

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FEB. ISSUE: Marshall Plan; Communist Attitude on Force and Violence--Letter & Disc.

DEC. ISSUE: We received such good response from our Nov. issue on the P.P. and were able to mail to so many new names, that we used our small finances to re-run that issue. This forced us to move our Dec. material forward to this issue.

EXCELLENT ANALYSIS OF THE 1948 ELECTIONS AND THE ROLE OF THE P.P.: "A Message from Alameda County Communists--1948 Elections: Danger Signal for the Working Class." Submitted by Committee of Alameda County Communists for the Re-establishment of a Marxist-Leninist CP, USA. For copies, write to: Joe Studevart, 2265- 83rd Ave., Oakland 5, Calif.

VERN SMITH DEFENSE: Funds are needed to appeal Smith case to Supreme Court. Send contributions to: Vern Smith Defense Committee, P.O. Box 2653, Sta. B, San Francisco, Calif. Vern Smith, former editor of the west coast Communist paper, the Daily People's World, refused to take oath or testify before the infamous Tenney Committee. He was cited for contempt, convicted and fined. The Smith Defense considered the fine (\$300) an easy-off bribe to facilitate a legal precedent and decided to appeal. Smith's conduct in court was that of a real Communist.