

# N. Y. Party Leaders Take New Look at Browder Line

By Herman Chauka

The New York State Committee of the Communist Party has decided to publish in its discussion bulletin a vigorous defense of Earl Browder and his period of leadership of the Communist Party. The decision to make the document available to the membership marks a new stage in the struggle now taking place in the Communist Party and comes as a fresh blow against National Chairman William Z. Foster.

Joseph Lash reported in the Aug. 23 New York Post that the State Committee had decided to publish the defense of Browder in its bulletin, Party Voice, despite vigorous protest from Foster. Written by "Chick Mason," an otherwise unidentified party member, the 15,000 word document, has been circulated among 200 CP leaders. Mason has prepared a 4,000 word abridgment for Party Voice.

The Post reports that Browder has read the Mason document and that he considers it "pretty sound, especially for one who's just had his eyes opened." Asked if he thought publication of the document foreshadowed overtures for his return to the party, Browder said he "would not predict that sort of thing."

Again according to the Post, Mason demands acceptance of the thesis that the "so-called Browder position was correct." Mason charges that with the expulsion of Browder in 1946 a "stampede back to isolation" took place and that the expulsion was seized on by Foster "to take over the 'theoretical' leadership of the Party."

## DO ALL DISAGREE?

The editor of Party Voice, Sam Coleman, in a statement in the Aug. 24 Daily Worker, denies any conflict with Foster on publication of the Mason document and says that it will be circulated "in line with our policy of publishing all views submitted in good faith by party members."

Coleman also asserts that "While there are differing views in the N.Y. State Party leadership, all, however, are in direct disagreement with Mason's views." This assertion flies directly in the face of the printed record. The June and July issues of Party Voice are devoted mainly to expressions of state committee members on Eugene Dennis' report to the National Committee on party perspectives.

The state committee discussion is studded with pleas to re-evaluate the Browder period and with veiled attacks on Foster.

Thus Al E. states, "I associate myself with the criticism of the Dennis report. . . I propose that the National Committee issue a statement about the many wrongly expelled over the past ten years. The Party must take an official stand on these questions. The Party must take another look into the Browder period."

Coleman himself, in the July issue, after tipping his hat to the fight against Browder's "opportunism," declares that "In our anxiety to purge ourselves of Browderism. . . we dumped out many of the valuable features of our work in the previous period." (Previous to the last 10 years.) "And we were quick to retreat from any policy or analysis that might be stigmatized as Browderite or revisionist or tainted with American exceptionalism."

Again, Don Lester, writes in the July PV, "It is my firm conviction that any effective struggle demands a, re-evaluation of the so-called 'Browder period.'" Lester also "holds no brief" for Browder, but he thinks "it is undeniable that Browder made the first serious effort to apply Marxism to the American scene and to relate it to the American past and future."

"It is no secret that sharp difference within the national leadership and between the national leadership and the N. Y. State Board have existed since Swift and others began the struggle against our sectarian line and errors in 1952," says Lester who concludes "Comrade Foster charged in 1945 that Browder used the 'fear of factionalism' to stifle opposition. We need equally to fight the 'unity of the party' slogan being used to force compromise and capitulation of the majority to the minority."

In the Aug. 26 Worker, Foster flays "those who are now so anxious to dissolve our party and to re-organize its forces on a neo-Browder basis." Despite Coleman's denials, Browder's ghost looms large over the present discussion.