

# 16th NATIONAL CONVENTION

# Discussion Bulletin

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## Party Unity Can Be Achieved

By PHIL BART

AS THE CONVENTION draws near, there is growing recognition of a sharpening crisis in our Party. Finding a solution out of this crisis becomes the paramount issue before us. Either we resolve our problems and move ahead, or come out of the convention split and even further weakened. This will require more than routine measures. It means acquainting the whole organization with the severity of the crisis and a struggle for the unity of the Party.

Our problems grow out of profound changes taking place in the whole Marxist movement. They are accentuated by the mistakes of our own Party over the past years.

The Resolution of the XXth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has been of considerable value to our Party. But that congress, besides examining national and international events, also gave an estimate of the period of Stalin's leadership. More precisely, it revealed a series of dastardly acts which have taken place over two decades. This revelation has had a dramatic impact on our Party. A long-standing desire to re-assess many established ideas and practices was accelerated as a result.

### IMPACT OF TWENTIETH CONGRESS

We had been trained over years to accept uncritically every proposition by Stalin. A large body of that thought has proven to be valid. Much of it, as indicated at the XXth Congress, was not. But such a revelation was bound to have a sharp impact on us. It raised the question of reassessing many principles long unquestioned. It stimulated the need of developing a scientific approach to questions which heretofore were accepted uncritically. Without searching for facts—without examining them and testing them in experiences, the conclusions become sterile, divorced from the realities. This explains the desire to seriously rethink many questions which heretofore were undisputed.

A generation of Marxists had been raised with the belief that Stalin represented the embodiment of nearly all the thought and experience of Marxism-Leninism. To question any of his propositions was to place in question a large body of scientific theory. That tremendous achievements were made under Stalin's leadership is already established by the history of the last three decades. But a full and objective evaluation will only take place in years to come.

It was under these conditions that we started our discussion. It was bound to have a strong influence on it, although we must state that many questions were raised by us before the 20th Congress. Chief among them was an effort to develop a program based on an American road to socialism, peaceful transformation, co-existence as the road to peace, etc.

The assessment of the role of Stalin has had a profound effect on our organization. Some began to question the whole body of Marxist-Leninist theory and its advance to socialism. To most it has raised the need of a review of much of our past thinking. Some raised the need of a critical review of every phase of our movement's development. Others have raised, in my opinion correctly, the need of a critical reevaluation which

should lead to some fundamental changes in our organization and program. It seems to me that the overwhelming majority seek such a reexamination, to find new solutions to new problems, in the present period. Very few desire to hold on to the old without any change.

Such examinations will require a protracted and sharp exchange of opinions. It cannot be resolved in one swoop. We cannot resolve all of our problems by the convention. It will take time. It requires testing many new ideas in life and learning to make changes as a result of experience. It is wrong to throw out the whole body of old and tested theory and replace it with new. It requires a combination of both.

The discussion has now proceeded for nearly a year. The National Committee has held a number of meetings and presented its position in many documents. Among them the Dennis report (April), the Draft Resolution (September), the Open Letter on Hungary (November), and the draft constitution (December). These documents had majority support. In addition many individual opinions were expressed by members of the N.C. However, from time to time we observed in individual writings a wide disparity between the vote and opinions expressed in articles. This is expected in a situation such as

### About This Bulletin

This bulletin will appear every two weeks until the national convention in February. We urge members of the Communist Party to write articles and letters giving their views in the Party discussion. It should be borne in mind that this phase of the pre-convention discussion is based on the draft resolution issued by the National Committee.

The deadline for articles for each issue is two weeks before publication date. If at all possible, manuscripts should be typed (double space).

MAXIMUM LENGTH FOR ARTICLES WILL BE 2,500 WORDS, though the shorter the better. Every effort will be made to have each issue present varying points of view, cover a variety of topics and represent different parts of the country.

Articles must receive some identification. They must be sent through district offices with an accompanying note from the district (or from the section in cases where the sections are far from the district headquarters).

Copies of resolutions adopted by clubs, sections, districts, etc. should be sent in the same way as articles. Many of these will be printed. Suggested amendments to the draft resolution should likewise be sent to the Discussion Committee. These too will be printed when of general interest.

Address all mail and material to Discussion Committee, 101 W. 16th St., New York 11, N.Y.

we have now. It could hardly be otherwise.

What I want to stress is not the differences, but the hardening of lines. That is dangerous. It can lead to factionalism. Such a situation can be harmful to the convention—can leave our Party sharply split. Differences of opinion following the convention (Continued on Page 5)

## 'IT SEEMS TO ME'

By EUGENE DENNIS

Profound questions confront our Communist Party. They have been generated by the big changes in the world, as well as by the repressive blows of the cold war decade, by our past mistakes, and by the severe impact of the Stalin revelations and the grave events in Hungary.

It seems to me that we can find correct answers to the vital questions which we face only on the basis of a collective understanding of the way things are, and the direction in which they are moving.

Many issues are open to dispute, and many facts are subject to more than one interpretation. But it seems to me that there are at least several basic truths, some of which are outlined in the Draft Resolution and are self-evident. If these are borne in mind, I believe they can provide the framework and a sound approach for resolving a host of questions, controversial and otherwise:

### THE STATE OF THE UNION

At this moment over-all production, employment and wages in the U. S. are at an all-time high.

BUT—we still have poverty, unemployment, and a rising cost of living in the midst of plenty. Millions of Americans, and especially millions of Negro Americans are ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed; and the factors making for a depression are still at work.

Automation and atomic energy create added material conditions for a more abundant life for all.

BUT—this staggering technological advance does not foreshadow a second industrial revolution, nor bring capitalism a second blooming, nor resolve the crisis-breeding contradictions in-

herent in the profit system.

The unity, heroism, and organizational know-how of the Negro people and their great liberation movement are electrifying the nation.

BUT—it will take many gigantic struggles to abolish segregation, discrimination, and the en-



EUGENE DENNIS

tire jimcrow system, to realize all that the Negro people strive for in their inspiring slogan: "Free by '63."

The AFL-CIO merger has enormously increased the strength and the potential power of American labor.

BUT—two-thirds of America's workers have yet to be organized especially in the Deep South. Within labor's new home sound union policies, including trade union democracy and an end to wage differentials and to racial and political discrimination—must still be fought for and won.

The American people have demonstrated their deep devotion to the Bill of Rights.

BUT—greater understanding, organization, and unity are needed to end the witch-hunt, eradicate Eastlandism and McCarthyism, and wipe all repressive legislation from the statute books.

Crowing numbers of peevish Americans, heartened by the Geneva accord, urge a ban on the testing of nuclear weapons, seek new approaches to the problem of universal disarmament, and hope for an end to the cold war.

BUT—this peace sentiment is not yet organized to exert a decisive influence on American foreign policy.

Anti-monopoly feeling is being stimulated by mass resentment and resistance to corporate profiteering, and by labor-farmer opposition to the Cadillac Cabinet and the economic royalists.

BUT—the anti-monopoly forces have not yet merged into an anti-monopoly coalition capable of curbing the monopolists who, through their own mergers, are tightening their grip on the nation's political and economic life.

It seems to me that from these self-evident truths there flow some equally self-evident conclusions, among them being the following:

1. Now and in the future, as in the past, the American people can get what they want only through resolute and united struggle.

2. Labor and the people cannot go forward in "partnership" with the monopolists, but only in alliance against them.

3. An anti-monopoly coalition, and eventually a new political and democratic alignment, a broad popular mass party led by labor—will not come about through spontaneous combustion.

To my way of thinking, and I believe for the majority of (Continued on Page 6)

## FARM ACTIVITY EXAMINED

By JOHN HELLMAN

BUTTE, Mont.

Some of our mistakes and weaknesses are the result of failing to understand and apply concepts of scientific socialism which are still very much valid. I would like discuss what I consider to be three of these, while commenting on past work among farmers: (1) the need for farm-labor unity; (2) the concept that principles can conflict and that certain principles must take precedent over others; and (3) the ebb and flow of the movement and its effect on our tactics.

Lenin emphasized the family-type farmer as a main ally of the working class. Neglect of the farm question has long been a weakness of our Party's work. The present Draft Resolution continues this weakness. It correctly devotes a section to our past work in the trade union field, and a section to our work in relation to the struggles of the Negro people. But there is no section on our work among the farmers. There should be.

### LEFT-SECTARIANISM IN FARM WORK

A review of our work among progressive farmers shows that we encouraged left-sectarian approaches. Progressive activity among members of two major farm organizations (Grange and Farm Bureau) was almost nothing. The historic attitude of Communists and progressives in writ-

ing off these organizations as "too reactionary and hopeless" still continues. But as long as thousands of working farmers belong to these organizations, we must not neglect efforts to influence them.

Among Farmers Union members we supported and tried to help build a Progressive Party when a few were for it. We encouraged progressives to fight for unpopular resolutions on the Marshall Plan, Point Four, East-West trade, recognition of Peoples China, the rearmament of Germany and Japan, or on the Korean War.

The progressive and center Farmers Union forces were formerly dead set on attacking progressives. They did so largely to the extent that progressives attempted to harness the organization with a program which the center forces felt would make them vulnerable to the reactionary offensive or would result in a partial loss of mass base. It is not a simple question of who was right or wrong on issues. We were wrong if we supported tactics that isolated progressives from the rank and file farmers.

When progressives suffered defeat and isolation we consoled them with the thought that principled questions were involved and that they were being principled. But we failed to see that principles can conflict. In advancing one principle, another can be violated. Oppo-

sition to German rearmament is a principled question but if activity on this question is carried on in such a way that it isolates progressives from fellow farmers then a far more important principle has been violated—the principle of maintaining contact and influence with the people. Big principles must have priority over little principles; and long-range principles must never be violated for the sake of short-range principles. Much of our membership and leadership failed to understand this.

Clearing up these points on principle are important because so often when there was resistance to a proposed tactic, some full-time bureaucrat would twist an arm with the argument that "principle is involved." The bureaucrat was technically correct, but failed to see all of the principles involved and which was most important.

Two very big and very long-range principles have been frequently violated (and still are) for lesser principles. These are the principles of maintaining ties with the masses and of farm (or labor, or Negro) unity.

People without mass ties are nothing politically and cannot influence the course of events. How well the class enemy knows this. Nor does this require an opportunist avoidance of hot questions. But if there is serious doubt about a tactic it is better to be cautious. The respect of (Continued on Page 5)

# ON MAKING CHANGES

By ALBERT E. BLUMBERG

THE COMING SECTION, state and national conventions will be a turning point not only in our discussion but in the life of our Party. Having reviewed past errors and their sources, we shall soon have to act on proposals for changes in program, policy and organization.

It should therefore be of concern to us all that certain problems have arisen which endanger the success of the conventions. These problems, I feel, have become more acute in recent weeks.

Vital questions of changes in Party perspective and organization, I believe, are becoming confused and distorted. There is a danger that attitudes may freeze around these distortions thus blocking a unified, com-



ALBERT E. BLUMBERG

radely search for answers. Our discussion is further disoriented by the fact that, despite the new needs and opportunities flowing from the crises abroad and the November elections, Party activity has declined on the central issues of peace, Negro rights and the economic conditions of the workers.

It is to this situation that this discussion article is addressed. **SERVICE OF DRAFT RESOLUTION**

The Draft Resolution with all its inadequacies, has performed a valuable service for our Party. Together with the articles by Foster, Dennis, Gates, Davis and others, it has helped bring into focus a number of the issues under debate. It has enabled us to avert what otherwise threatened to become an aimless and endless discussion.

The Draft Resolution, in my opinion, not only focuses many issues but provides a generally sound direction for the working class struggle for socialism in our country. It begins to look into what is new today at home and abroad. It puts forward the strategic concept of a people's

anti-monopoly coalition and government led by labor. It elaborates the possibility of a peaceful, constitutional path to socialism in America. It affirms the perspective of an eventual broad new socialist regrouping.

Moreover, the Resolution, I feel, makes a sound estimate of our errors and their sources. It calls for an end to dogmatism and for the creative application of Marxism to the American scene; for international working class and socialist solidarity based on an independent, friendly but critical democratic determination of our policies and activities with provision for the right of dissent after decisions.

However, the Resolution does not spell out directly and clearly a new perspective for our organization. This is one of the reasons why the discussion on this question is subject to such confusion.

To this must be added the impact of recent events. The Resolution speaks of the bright new perspective of peace and social progress opening up for our country and all mankind. The crisis in the Middle East and Eastern Europe as well as the outcome of the elections do not invalidate this perspective. But they do prove again, as the Resolution states, that this is a perspective to be fought for, not a reality to be enjoyed.

This perspective will not be realized without great difficulties and great struggles. It will not be realized without a great forward movement by the American working-class, in political alliance with the Negro people, the farmers and small businessmen against the policies and power of the giant monopolies. Nor can a powerful anti-monopoly coalition be built without the growing contribution and leadership of an expanding socialist current in which advocates of scientific socialism play an increasingly influential role.

Thus recent events emphasize that the decisive question for us Communists is how to help assure the continuity and growth of American Marxist organization.

That is why we must reject at the outset of any discussion of Party perspectives any and all proposals to dissolve and disperse our Party, the main organ-

ized Marxist force in our country.

That is why, even as we discuss, we must make a maximum effort to increase our struggle for peace, and to concentrate our activity in the post-election period on the decisive domestic issue of civil rights and the fight against Eastland and the Dixiecrats, for the amending of Senate Rule 22, for further steps towards full equality for the Negro people and towards a political realignment led by labor.

That is why we must call a halt to invective and distrust and seek an atmosphere of principled discussion combined with an earnest, patient concern for Party unity.

These, I believe, are essential pre-conditions for a fruitful discussion of proposed changes in perspective and organization.

## BASIS FOR AGREEMENT

In the absence of a clear lead from the Draft Resolution, the discussion on changes in Party organization, form and name is becoming polarized around two extreme positions. The one demands that we retain a Marxist-Leninist organization but tends to interpret all proposals for any changes as an abandonment of Marxist-Leninism. The other insists on sweeping changes but frequently advances open-ended proposals with no clearly defined ideological or theoretical premises or limits. The two extremes interact. The former tends to harden against all changes whatever; the latter, to become more intransigent in its demands.

A more flexible, more unified approach is both necessary and possible. In this respect, a good example is the National Committee Open Letter on Hungary—a

statement endorsed by the overwhelming majority of the Party leadership.

This Open Letter was based on the Draft Resolution position regarding our attitude towards Marxist parties abroad. It applied this position to the complex question of assessing the nature and causes of the upheavals in Poland and Hungary. It achieved broad agreement on this assessment together with a frank recognition of differences within our leadership and membership on the second use of Soviet troops.

Thus there was a common starting-point. This was coupled with the recognition that it was not necessary to settle all differences at a given moment.

Applying this thought to the problem of Party changes, we need to ask those who oppose most significant changes to re-examine their thinking, to stop clinging to abstractions, to give careful consideration to serious proposals and not to dismiss them as "gimmicks" or bids for "respectability."

On the other hand, the responsibility is, if anything, greater on those who urge sweeping changes to give earnest thought to the alarm and doubts which such proposals evoke. With the concern for Party unity at all times in mind, our responsibility is to spell out certain ideological premises.

The Draft Resolution proposes that the National Convention set up a committee to prepare and submit a new basic program defining our position on all fundamental questions relating to the struggle for socialism in America. This is certainly necessary.

However, I do not think that we can or must wait till then to seek agreement on a few elementary principles on the basis of which we can then examine the question of whether there should be changes in organization, form and name. I would list among others the following:

1) A socialist reorganization of our American society is necessary. While post-war American capitalism has developed many new features, we reject any notion that it has found the secret of perpetual economic youth. It is still subject to the basic laws of capitalism and of the class struggle (however the application of these laws may be modified). It still lives on exploitation and racial oppression and breeds insecurity, crisis and decay.

2) Socialism will abolish exploitation and permit the full realization of American democratic aspiration on all levels—economic, political and social. We reject any concept that undemocratic practices are inherent in Socialism.

3) The American working-class and its supporters cannot achieve socialism without independent, working-class political organization having socialism as its ultimate aim. We reject any idea that American capitalism will spontaneously transform itself into socialism. Or that we will "creep" into it without organized struggle for socialism by the working-class and their friends among the Negro people, the farmers and the professionals.

4) A socialist political organization cannot aspire to lead the working-class and people into socialism unless it bases its policies and proposals upon an ad-

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## NAME AND FORM DISCUSSED

By ALAN SHAW

MILWAUKEE, Wis.

**DOES AMERICA need a Communist movement? Do American workers, working farmers and Negro people need a movement which is based upon the principles, methods and outlook of Marxism?**

This is the primary question that I think is before us. Perhaps to many of this sounds like a very foolish question, like asking, "Does Carter have any little liver pills?" But the different proposals for dissolution of the Party (both from outside and inside our ranks), with no real hope or realistic outlook of anything to replace it—pose exactly that question. . . .

To generalize the problem let us ask, "If the Party did not exist, would we organize it?" I feel that we would have to. We would have to because for the American working class to be without a Marxist wing would mean for it to be much poorer in its day to day struggles against monopoly and in its long range need for a democratic socialist America. That we would organize a Marxist movement considerably different from that of the past—that is the next question that has to do with what changes are needed. But I think we must settle the first question first. We must have a Marxist movement in the United States—not because of emotional ties to the past, nor even because the Communist Party has in the past made significant contributions towards the welfare and thinking of the people. Rather, we must have a Communist movement because we are convinced that the present and the future of the American people need it.

### MARXIST MOVEMENT NEEDED

A Marxist movement is needed by the American people to play a leading (vanguard, if you wish) role in helping to advance a class consciousness and to create a socialist-consciousness. The former is needed to make victories possible in the day to day struggles against the trusts, and the latter is needed to speed the day when the trusts will be no more. Such a consciousness and

the ideology it is based on does not develop spontaneously. There must be an organization which promotes these ideas and strives to win people for them; an organization which bases itself on a scientific materialist approach.

The existence of such a movement is needed by the working people of America. As the largest organized body of American Marxists we have the responsibility in this discussion to keep this need uppermost. This is the special contribution that we have to make to American life. That is why we must not let our movement disappear. It is not a question of the "law of survival," that we must go on existing just in order to exist. A Marxist movement must exist as part of American life for the role that it has to play. That role is one of participating fully in the economic, political and social battles of the people vs. the trusts, as part of the movements of the people—and in the course of this participation to play a vanguard ideological role as a Left-wing of the American workers and farmers, as its socialist section. It would be desertion in the face of difficulties (great as they may be) to leave America without any cohesive movement of class-consciousness and socialist-consciousness to participate in its struggles and to project a future of a classless society.

Is the Communist Party able to play this role today? Largely not. But that is what the discussion is all about. About how to make those kind of changes which will put us in a position to play that role among the people. Can it be done? There are no "double your money back guarantees." But dissolution will not do it, that's for sure. None of the advocates of dissolution offer anything but a hope and a prayer that something might possibly come into being. On the one hand, if we make the necessary changes, chart the right course in February—and work hard and correctly over a period of years, I feel that it can be done. . . .

We do inherit handicaps and liabilities from the past—but we also inherit 20,000 devoted ex-

perienced members who are all thinking today and speaking their minds; we also inherit a science and a better knowledge of how to use it, and we also inherit the lessons of experience. So that I think we have better than a fighting chance to be able to prevent the American scene from being without a Marxist movement—if we face up to all of our problems and don't try to sweep anything under the rug. . . .

The Draft Resolution goes a long way toward making the kind of changes we need to make: bringing Marxist theory up to date and applying it correctly to American conditions; altering our relationship to other people's movements, and more clearly assessing our role; re-vamping our forms and methods of organization. In some respects I think the resolution should go further—especially in emphasizing our goal of democratic socialism to be democratically attained. In other respects I think we have to reaffirm certain beliefs of the past more strongly: the fact that we base ourselves mainly on the working class as the most important section of society or in our obligation to the peoples of Latin America. In the main, I greet the resolution for its tackling in an honest and forthright way the changes that are needed in theoretical approach, in relationship to the Soviet Union, in relationship to the people's movements and in democratization of the Party.

What I would like to go into here are two of the questions that are not sufficiently dealt with in the resolution: name and electoral form. . . .

### NAME OF ORGANIZATION

Both of these questions (name and form) should, I think, be approached from our original starting point—the need for a Marxist movement, capable of performing its role. The need is not to keep this or that from the past, but to find the forms that will best suit this primary need. I have, we all have, had a strong organizational partisanship toward the Communist Party, fighting for its existence, its

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# Leadership Problems Facing Us

By MARTHA STONE

NEWARK, N. J.

The question of Party leadership looms up as a very urgent matter for the Convention. To an extent the future unity of the Party depends on how this question will be resolved by the National Convention.

At the time of the 1945 Convention there was widespread dissatisfaction in the ranks of the membership with the inadequate changes made in Party leadership after the rejection of the Browder revisionist policy. This criticism was justified. At the time of the 1948 convention, the National leadership of the Party faced indictment under the Smith Act. With the growing persecutions of Communists, the Convention further restricted the national leadership core by



MARTHA STONE

the election of a very small National Committee. The 1950 convention made only a few additions to that National Committee. The small size of the National Committee did not correspond to the needs of the Party. It cannot be defended only on the basis of the attacks on the organization. It also reflected strong tendencies to centralize leadership in the hands of a few, and the strong bureaucratic pressures upon the organization.

## CHANGES IN NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The first prerequisite for uniting the Party on the leadership question is to recognize the need to make major changes in the national leadership of the Party. This, I believe, will correspond to the healthy reactions of our membership in the present discussion. It is also dictated by the very nature of the review of our past policies as expressed in the Dennis report and Draft Resolution.

It would be a contradiction to accept the Dennis report and the conclusions of the Resolution as to the errors of our Party policies, and then fail to draw the proper organizational conclusions. This has nothing in common with anti-leadership attitudes or a "clean sweep" approach, or proposals for indiscriminate and reckless changes of leadership. The changes in policy indicated by the Draft Resolution require changes in Party leadership so as to give our organization the guarantee that its leadership corps will be sufficiently refreshed, that old bureaucratic relationships will be broken up, and that a new leadership reflecting varying views that exist in the Party will be brought into being, capable of carrying out the convention decisions.

Furthermore, I believe that in the election of a new leadership the emphasis should be placed on the collective character of the committees as against past emphasis on election of chief officers. I think this too is required in order to re-establish the confidence of the membership in its leadership and in order to de-emphasize the authority of individuals. The way to re-win this confidence is by a combination of establishing collectivity of leadership and by the personal

performance of every Party leader.

There is no doubt that this convention faces certain limitations in solving leadership problems due to the objective conditions in which it takes place. Obviously it is impossible to bring to the convention and into the National Center many of the comrades who have made important contributions in mass and trade union work over this past period. To my mind, this makes it all the more necessary to place our emphasis on the collective forms of work for the succeeding period.

The leadership elected at this convention should have the task of leading the Party's mass work, to develop a full Party program to help resolve many unsettled ideological questions as well as the question of the Party name and form—all to be settled at the next succeeding convention.

## QUALITIES FOR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

At this coming convention we need to refresh the Party's leadership and to elect a large National Committee. The Draft Constitution makes provision for such a large committee and guarantees a broader base of representation from all districts of the Party. What are the qualities for the National Committee that should guide us in this election?

1. Loyalty and devotion to the Party and the workingclass.

2. Comrades tested in the class struggle who can be relied upon to represent the interests of the workingclass and the Party and are capable of fighting all bourgeois influences and ideologies.

3. To select people who have ties and connections with the workingclass and the American people, whose daily life brings them naturally in touch with these non-Party masses. Where comrades are promoted for the National Committee who have not had such relationships in the recent period through no fault of their own, the Party must examine the activity of such comrades to determine whether such comrades feel an urgent need for such mass relationships. People who are perfectly "at home" without non-Party ties, who are content to live an inner-Party life alone, cannot provide the Party with the qualities of leadership we need now.

4. In selecting a new National Committee we should take into account the personal characteristics of all candidates. They should be men and women whose personal qualities bring a favorable response from non-Party masses. In the past we gave little attention to the question of personal characteristics. In Lenin's advice to the Party on the question of leadership, he pointed up Stalin's personal weaknesses — his harshness and rudeness in dealing with people. Here Lenin referred not only to political and theoretical qualifications that Stalin undoubtedly had; he referred also to a serious personal characteristic and warned the Party that under certain conditions it could do great damage if too much authority was placed in Stalin's hands.

Is it not true that many times when we select personnel for various posts we make only "objective observations," and give little attention to the question of personal habits and characteristics? Yet it is a fact that masses of workers were attracted to our movement by such comrades as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn not only because of their correct policies in mass struggles, but also by their personal characteristics that integrated them so completely with the masses. In these personal qualities masses saw an identity of interests between the Party leader and the mass.

5. We should select comrades

for the National Committee who over the past years have displayed the ability to think independently, to probe into questions, to challenge wrong policies and to present correct ones; who have the courage of their convictions.

The Draft Constitution proposal that all districts nominate their candidates for the National Committee, takes a big step towards closing the gap between the national leadership and the membership. But this in itself is not enough. During the past 10 years or more a system of work has developed nationally which has removed many of our national functionaries from a base adopt a general rule that all national personnel must be active members of a given district and some part of their national assignment must be directed towards helping their district carry through policies decided on by the National and District committees. No leader can be "too big" for this type of assignment. Leaders who do not look favorably upon such tasks are not suitable for national leadership.

As a result of the Party's highly centralized and bureaucratic forms of work, many national comrades have in the past period lost touch with the membership and have become almost unknown to the Party. This has had a damaging effect on them and has weakened the ability of the National Committee to shape correct policy for the National Committee moved from the membership.

Some of these comrades (who held leading elected posts in important Party districts where they had established real roots),

were torn out of their districts, often against their emphatic protests; their ties with the membership were disrupted while they themselves were shifted to other areas of the country and other fields of work. To treat such comrades who had been drafted for other fields of work—precisely because of their experience, devotion and ties with membership—as people without roots today (instead of enabling them to re-establish their ties), would be to penalize them for their valuable service to the Party. The burden for this situation does not rest on the individuals. It falls on the organization, its National Committee and the system and style of work it developed.

## SOCIAL COMPOSITION

The new National Committee must reflect more the social composition of our Party and our country. In the first place it must have a large number of working-class forces from the various districts. While it is true that our Party's illegal status in the shops places serious limits on the election of shop workers and trade unionists, nevertheless a conscious effort must be made to achieve a better representation. Objective conditions alone cannot determine the composition of our National Committee. In consultation with many of the shop workers we must try to resolve this question as best we can.

This convention must increase the number of Negro men and women on the National Committee. The fulfillment of the tasks set forth in the Draft Resolution in regard to strengthening our

Party's work among the Negro masses makes this incumbent upon us. Furthermore, there are many Negro comrades in our Party who in recent years have cemented their ties with the Negro community and have made important contributions in the struggle against left-sectarianism in the Negro field, as well as in the Party's general work.

If our national leadership is to reflect the forces in our country, it must include people on the National Committee who have intimate ties with farmers, the Negro people, youth, women and the cultural and intellectual forces of our country. The narrowness of our past National Committee led to separation of many of these forces from the Party's leadership. If our Party is to be more like other people's organizations it must have outstanding spokesmen in its leadership in all these fields of mass work. The problem in the past years has not been the failure to have comrades who can contribute on a national level, but rather that the restrictions on the size of the National Committee and the narrowness of its composition, excluded many forces who are known among the intellectuals, the farmers, the youth, and women's movements of our country.

## FULL-TIME OFFICIALS

In all districts the pre-convention discussion has correctly criticized the overemphasis the Party has placed on a system of full-time functionaries as a means of carrying work forward. What should be our attitude to this question now? I think the Party, like many other mass organiza-

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# Our Crisis and the New Times

By Daniel B. Schirmer

BOSTON, Mass.

It seems that three elements make up our Party's crisis: Leftism, bureaucracy and extreme Russo-philism.

Thus to improve things, we need: to merge with the people, to associate with their struggles; to adopt more democratic practices within the Party, to elevate the role of the membership; to Americanize the Party, to try more energetically to apply Marxism to the American scene, rejecting dogma and slavish copying of foreign models, to explore with the people the American road to socialism.

The last may prove the root problem. Both Leftism and bureaucracy have found much nourishment in insufficient effort to apply Marxism to the American scene.

The 20th Congress of the Russian party helped us to see these things more clearly here in the United States.

But the full consciousness of our crisis has deeper roots than this. Thus we began to tackle Leftism, one aspect of our crisis a couple of years ago at least.

## POST-WAR CHANGES

The crisis of our Party springs from a deeper source: the tremendous post-war shift in world relationships, the growth of the forces of peace and socialism, as against the decline of the forces of imperialism and war.

What inaugurated this new era of great popular strength? Many things, but perhaps the single most important is the victory of the Chinese people. When Truman pulled back McArthur, he did so because across the Yalu lay not China alone, but her friend in peace, the Soviet Union. The Chinese-Soviet alliance is the bedrock of the new system of international relationships.

It is true that the emergence of the European People's Democracies was a great event, but these countries, neither individually nor as a group, compare

in world importance to China. The Chinese revolution provided a great new rallying point for the peoples of Asia and Africa, shattering world colonialism. The second greatest popular advance since the October Revolution could not be without the most profound and universally felt consequences.

From another viewpoint, revolutionary change in these European countries came in the wake of the military defeats inflicted on Hitlerism by the Soviet and Allied armies, an extraordinary unique historical situation, bringing on unique problems, now at an acute stage of development.

Of course, the Russian revolution prepared the way for the Chinese. Still the Chinese people did not travel and are not travelling the same road as the Russians; they went their own way, and continue to do so. The Chinese people were successful in liberating themselves because they had developed a native Marxism, as Lenin and his followers had done in Russia before them.

The Chinese revolution brought to the fore again one of the greatest lessons of the Russian revolution: the need to find national expression for the international theories of Marxism.

It was the successful application of Marxism to the process of Chinese history that especially helped lay the basis for an era of peaceful co-existence.

Is it too much to expect that a persistent and many-sided attempt to apply Marxism to the American scene would not only strengthen the cause of Socialism in our country, but also help, in a modest way, the American people to insure peace?

If by adopting more correct policies we can prevent the lies of "foreign agents," "conspiracy," "force and violence," etc. from having such a wide public acceptance, then we will have blunted the edge of one of re-

action's main propaganda weapons.

## NEW METHODS DEMAND A NEW FORM

The key thing is the relationship of the Party to the mass of the people, its external relationships.

It is especially in order to strengthen our external, mass relationships that our internal affairs must be set in order and a bureaucratic system reformed.

For a bureaucratic system of leadership has contributed to our Leftism. The Party leaders tended to set themselves above the Party and thus to lead it away from the people.

It is true that as the Party changes its policies, makes itself more part of the people, more democratic, more American, its connections with the people will improve.

But the Party is more than the sum total of its relationships with the people at any point. It also has a past history as a political entity.

Our mistakes have laid a certain base in public opinion for the reactionary charges of "foreign agents," "conspiracy," etc., and so have helped the reactionaries to isolate us.

The point is: how can the Party most effectively break with its past mistakes (which have been serious and of some duration)?

Some have the opinion that there must be a sharp, all-embracing formal break. Not only the content of our work must change, but its form as well.

From this standpoint our Party should change its name and organizational form; change from a Communist Party to a league or association devoted to struggle for the immediate needs of the people and education for socialism.

Of course, the reactionaries will charge that this is just the same thing with a different name.

But the change must be one of content as well as form also

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# A Reply to Bill Norman And Others

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

In the national Discussion Bulletin No. 2 Comrade Bill Norman, misrepresenting my point of view on various questions, characterizes my general position as one of "moving backwards," and he says that, if adopted, it would "doom our Party to impotence." In view of this and similar attacks from comrades on the Right, I have requested space in the Bulletin to express my position concisely upon a number of pertinent questions now before us, in the general sense of what must be done to re-strengthen the C.P. U.S.A. and to overcome its crisis. Most basic of all to this end, our Party must stand firmly upon the elementary principles of Marxism-Leninism, adapting them skilfully to American conditions. In nearly 40 years of political experience in this country Marxism-Leninism (despite the various mistakes which, not surprisingly, we have made in its application) has demonstrated effectiveness of the Communist itself in the greater growth and Party—to be incomparably better fitted to the American class struggle than any of the several brands of Social Democracy practiced by other American Left wing groups. This is the rock bottom test of reality. Our cue, therefore, is not to abandon Marxism-Leninism, as the Rights are trying to have us do, but to help develop it and to make it still more adapted to the specific national conditions in this country. In my article entitled, "Marxism-Leninism in a Changing World" (beginning in September 1956 Political Affairs), I have made a comprehensive survey of the role of Marxism-Leninism in this general period, with special stress upon its tasks and developmental needs, both on a national and international scale. To stand true to our Marxist-Leninist principles is the first indispensable in re-strengthening our Party.

## PARTY AND VANGUARD ROLE

Progress demands imperatively, too, that we definitely retain the Party form of organization—and not upon a vacillating "for the time being" basis. A Party is incomparably the better form of organization for carrying on political struggle among the masses. Especially we must hold to our election and legislative activities. It is nonsense to say that there is no room for a Communist Party in a country like ours with a two-party system. The reverse has been fully dem-

onstrated by the experience of the British Communist Party, with its broad mass following.

To transform ourselves into a so-called political action association, as Comrades Gates, Norman, and others are advocating, would be a disaster for American Communism. Such a flabby and shapeless organization could not improve our legal position, strengthen our contacts with the masses, or itself take on a mass character. At most, it could only be an ineffective, semi-Social-Democratic propaganda body. To give up our Party for such a nondescript organization would be a long leap backward, an impermissible surrender to arrogant American imperialism.

Imperative, too, for our Party's well-being and growth is that it develop a perspective of sharp struggle for the oncoming period. In a world where Socialism is rising and capitalism dying, and where the monopolists are fighting to preserve their system, inevitably big struggles will lie ahead. This is especially why the working class must have a fighting Communist Party. In the United States the workers must orientate upon a perspective of an increasing struggle with the force of monopoly capital, and internationally the workers and their allies will also be able to maintain and develop peaceful co-existence among the various powers only at the price of ceaseless vigilance and powerful pressure for peace. The current industrial boom is wearing towards its end. We must beware of the class peace, class collaborationist ideas that underlie the present movement to castrate Marxism-Leninism and the Communist Party in the United States. The C.P.U.S.A., in harmony with the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism must have a class struggle perspective.

By the same token, the Party must also retain and develop its vanguard role. During its four decades of life the C.P. in this country has indisputably scored many important successes—in strikes and unemployment movements, in defense of Negro rights, in the struggle against fascism and war, and in various other fields of class conflict—and in every instance its policies most definitely have borne a vanguard character. A similar need and opportunity still confronts the Party. Actually, on every front of the class struggle, whether it is in the fight to unionize the workers, to combat Jim Crowism and white chauvinism, to lay the basis for a great labor-farmer party, to cultivate a Socialist ideology among the workers, or

to carry out any others of countless tasks, the doorway is wide open for the characteristic Communist vanguard initiative, tirelessness, and organizing ability. Those who see no further vanguard role in our Party see ahead of the workers little or no class struggle in general upon either the national or international scale. About all they contemplate for Communists to do is to make abstract propaganda for Socialism. Tenden-



WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

cies to drop the Party's vanguard role are tendencies to tail along after the conservative mass leaders. A Communist Party without a vanguard role would amount to nothing politically.

Of course, in the vital matter of the vanguard role, as in other spheres of work, sectarian errors must be guarded against. For one thing, the Party must develop more cooperative relations with other Left elements that are genuinely working for Socialism. Eventually, when possible, it should merge with such groups, essentially upon a Marxist-Leninist basis. In this general respect, however, those comrades are doing a great disservice to the Communist Party who are creating the impression that a new, broad party of Socialism is a possibility of the near future. They have tended seriously to liquidate our Party by denying its future.

To improve our Party's democracy and to fight against bureaucratic tendencies in the organization is obviously also of basic importance in re-building our Party. This is one of the central lessons taught by the shocking Stalin revelations, and it is also one to which our membership is very much awake. Many good clauses in this general respect have been incorporated in the Draft Constitution now before the Party, which I voted for, with reservations against certain seriously wrong formulations regarding Marxism-Leninism.

## CRITICISM AND SELF- CRITICISM

To strengthen its application of the basic Leninist principle of self-criticism is another major improvement the Party must make. But in this matter, during the past months, we have made some ghastly mistakes. We have not only criticized the real errors that were made during the cold-war years, and they were many and real; but we have also greatly exaggerated these shortcomings, while largely ignoring the Party's achievements. There has been a sort of competition as to who could point out the most errors, including many imaginary ones. This has been pushed to the extreme of almost completely discrediting the Party, its past policy, its basic theory, and its leadership. In fact, with such excesses we

have made a laughing stock of ourselves in the labor movement. The general result has been to pessimize and demoralize many Party members and to make them ready even for such a desperate and futile "remedy" as a political action association.

We have also been one-sided in our self-criticism in that we have concentrated all our attack upon Left-sectarianism and paid no attention whatever to the growing Right tendency, except to shield it from attack. With the result that the latter has a free hand in the Party, confusing the members and our political line, until now it is threatening the very existence of the Party, with its proposals for a political action association. Of course, we must fight Left-sectarianism as our main, traditional weakness, but we must also fight the Right danger, or we will suffer disaster.

Among the various major improvements necessary in our Party work—graphically taught also by the great debate over the Stalin cult of the individual—is a more critical attitude towards other Communist parties and towards the countries of Socialism. Everybody recognizes that in the past our policy in this matter, based upon a distorted desire for international solidarity, was incorrect. There has been too much blind following the leader. But the new criticism must not be pushed to the extent of nihilism or anti-Sovjetism, as some comrades seem to want us to do. The events of the past weeks—the serious crisis, over the Suez Canal and the projected capitalist coup in Eastern Europe—should be flaming warnings to us of the continuing need for international Communist solidarity. In these days of unsettled world relationships there is need for greater Communist unity, not less. And this is precisely what the new fraternal criticism and discussion in world Communist ranks must lead to, although upon a more democratic basis. At the same time, we must be alert to combat incipient bourgeois chauvinist tendencies in our Party, of which there are now all too many.

## INITIATIVE ON THEORY

Vitaly important, too, in this general respect is it for our Party to display more initiative than in the past in tackling new theoretical problems. This, also, is one of the basic lessons emerging from the worldwide debate over Stalinism. Failure in this basic respect has been one of our Party's major weaknesses, including also my own. May I here, however, say a few words in personal defense against those comrades who, boasting of their own "total Marxist creativeness" (which consists mainly in liquidating the Communist Party organizationally and theoretically) consider as "moving backward" all those who reject their opportunist program.

In the several months prior to the 20th Congress of the C. P. S.U. in February, 1956, I wrote three articles of a theoretical character in Political Affairs. One of them, entitled "Has World Capitalism Become Stabilized?" developed pioneer analysis that the capitalist world, following World War II, had not succeeded in stabilizing itself, neither partially nor temporarily, neither economically nor politi-

cally. A second article entitled, "The Advance of Socialism to World Leadership," outlined at length the elementary fact that, in the world competition between the Socialist and capitalist systems, Socialism in many respects had already "overtaken and surpassed" capitalism. The third article, under the caption, "The Road to Socialism," was an up-to-date restatement of my 1949 pamphlet on this question.

I hastened the preparation of these articles so as to get them "under the wire" before the holding of the 20th Congress, precisely in order that our Party could display some political initiative and not have to tail along after the Congress on these important theoretical matters. It so happened that, in the main, the conclusions arrived at in my three articles dovetailed with those of the 20th Congress. Of course, all this effort of mine does not measure up to the grandiloquent concept of "total Marxist creativeness" of Comrade Norman, but certainly it does not qualify as "moving backward." Nor so classified can be my article in the November Political Affairs entitled, "Karl Marx and Mass Impoverishment," which challenges head-on the generations-long harmful sectarian interpretation of Marx's basic law of the absolute impoverishment of the working class.

In this general respect, let me also inject another personal remark. I wish to dissociate myself completely from the opportunistic distortion of the "peaceful" road to Socialism in this country which is now being propagated widely in our Party and which is sometimes attributed to me. In my 1949 pamphlet on the subject—*In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders*—I definitely developed the thesis (which was also substantially sustained by the 20th Congress) that in the U. S. the path to Socialism is bound to be one of hard struggle, with the monopolists trying to use every violence against the advancing workers, and with the latter striving to restrain and defeat this violence, so that they can hold intact the national democratic processes in order to achieve Socialism along parliamentary lines. My conclusion was, (and I still stick to it) that our Party should orientate upon the "possibility" of achieving a "relatively peaceful" advance to Socialism. We must have a struggle perspective in this matter, not an outlook of class peace and class collaboration.

## MARXIST-LENINIST BASIS FOR PARTY

Obviously the CPUSA is now in a serious internal crisis, both in membership strength and in ideology. This crisis has developed from a number of major factors, including the long-range effects of "prosperity" illusions among the masses; the bitter attack upon the Party by the government during the war crisis of the cold war years; the demoralizing effects of the Stalin situation, especially the tragedy in Hungary; various serious Left mistakes made by the Party, and the growth of a strong Right tendency which is exerting serious liquidatory effects upon the Party, both organizationally and theoretically.

The foregoing points are some of the major steps, together with the development of a strong program of practical work in every field, that should be taken to save our Party, to unite it, and to put it again on the way to growth and mass influence. This can and will be done. The Gates plan to liquidate the Party into a so-called political action organization is the very heart of the threat against the Party and its ideology. To defeat this ill-advised plan and to restart building our organization upon the basis of a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party must be made the center of the present Party discussion and of the coming CP national convention.



# ON MAKING CHANGES FARM ACTIVITY EXAMINED

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vanced theory. This theory must embody the substance of the principles of scientific socialism as interpreted, developed and applied in relation to American conditions. We reject the view that a socialist political organization can fulfill its leadership role without full utilization of the great contributions of Marx, Engels and Lenin and the accumulated experience of the world working-class.

5) The form of organization most suitable for American Marxists should be determined by American custom and tradition and in particular by the specific features of the American path to socialism, by the task of striving to give leadership to the struggle for a peaceful, democratic and constitutional transition. We reject the view that proper organizational forms can be arrived at by mechanically copying the experience of other countries and other times and conditions.

## AMERICAN MARXIST PARTY NEEDED

These or similar premises, it seems to me, establish the unconditional need for an American Marxist organization. They should be the common starting point of any discussion of organizational changes in our Party.

For example, on the much discussed question of vanguard role: If we separate that concept from bureaucratic errors in its application, if we recognize the need to strive for leadership, not arrogantly assume that we do lead the working-class—then it seems to me that the basic concept is sound. Such a role is essential to a Marxist organization.

It follows that we should reject, as the Draft Resolution does, proposals to transform our own Party into a purely educational society. This would divorce theory from practice, give up any effort to gain some degree of leadership, and result in dispersing the main body of American Marxists.

It follows, too, that in making necessary organizational changes to assure a genuinely democratic set-up, we must not ignore the need for unity and cohesiveness. That is why I be-

lieve we should make radical modifications in the concept of democratic centralism (like guaranteeing the right of dissent after decisions) but not abandon the substance altogether.

As to the terms "vanguard," "democratic centralism" and "monolithic unity," I think we can well afford to drop them once and for all.

Finally, when limited by these premises, and with agreement on the question of leadership role, proposals to change our Party's name and form emerge more clearly as matters of tactics. They do not involve questions of principle or "connotations" of principle.

Such proposals have to do with the best form of Marxist organization, not its essence. They are nonetheless of very great importance. They need to be discussed on their merits free from loose charges of "liquidationism" as well as from illusions that they are panaceas. Such discussion must not only focus on their advisability in general, but on their timing as well, and seek a really broad agreement. For this reason I doubt if it is either necessary or possible to settle these matters at the coming convention.

My own belief, briefly, inclines to a change in both name and form—once fundamental direction has been established. Such changes, I agree, are not "gimmicks" when made in the context of the many policy changes we are about to carry through. I think such changes will not only dramatize but facilitate the carrying through of the new policies proposed in the Draft Resolution. They will make it more possible to bring Marxist thinking to wider circles, especially among trade-unionists. They will help—but of course not in themselves win—the necessary struggle to legalize socialist thinking in the unions, and in the Negro, farm and other people's organizations. They will strengthen the impact of the organized Marxists upon other socialist and Left currents and enable us to contribute more effectively to an eventual new socialist regroupment in our country.

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people and the ability to work with them can be lost in a minute and regained only in years.

Rigid and sectarian tactics isolated progressive farmers. There was too much working for the "record." Often it would have been correct and would have been acceptable to the majority if progressives had expressed an opinion and offered their ideas in a modest, moderate and thought-provoking manner, instead of presenting a formal resolution with a do or die fight behind it. Is it the goal to see how many resolutions can be offered here, there and elsewhere? Too many progressives measured their political achievements in terms of their success at passing resolutions or electing friends to office rather than by the gains in organization, participation and political understanding at the grass roots level.

From a long-range standpoint, the cause of peace and socialism was harmed more than helped by fights for recognition of Peoples China at the cost of progressives losing respect and influence among people. Suggestive and thought-provoking comment to help people unravel questions was more in order than demands for immediate action. It is infantile to expect militant action before people have formed firm convictions. It takes quantitative change to build a qualitative change. It takes a number of years for this process among the people, it can't be sped up with sheer courage and Leftism.

It is true that reaction demanded its pound of flesh in the form of witchhunts everywhere. But had progressive tactics not been sectarian, the success of witchhunts was no more inevitable than fascism itself.

Sectarian tactics helped split the Farmers Union and made it possible for the national organization to expel a number of state organizations. High-handed methods were used; but sincere center forces in the various states would very possibly have prevented such expulsions had the groups under attack not made themselves so vulnerable.

Both sectarian and opportunist errors can be avoided if there is a searching out and weighing of principles involved. Some progressive unionists are still violating the big principle of labor unity in the name of all sorts of lesser principles.

## EBB AND FLOW OF MOVEMENT

While sectarianism was fed by failure to recognize major principles, closely related to this was the failure to evaluate the ebb and flow of the working class movement.

The Thirties and early Forties was a period of general flow or advance. The working class and its allies made substantial gains. Offensive tactics were in general use and were successful.

After World War II the flow was reversed. An ebb set in. Major factors in this change were the aggressive counter-attack of U. S. imperialism plus farm and working class complacency and decline of militancy, which were fed by past victories and better all around conditions. The ebb materialized politically in Taft-Hartley, loyalty oaths, Smith Act prosecutions, etc.

The ebb required new tactics, mainly defensive. The main mass of people were hesitating and retreating. For the vanguard to stand its ground or go on a full offensive in such situation could only mean isolation and annihilation. Does the General Staff of an army advance when its army is retreating?

Of course the vanguard must do all it can to stop or limit retreat but to let itself be cut off by itself means disaster. We did this politically in many instances where it could have been avoided.

In the late Forties and early Fifties many old timers and leaders promoted the same tactics that had been successful in the Thirties and early Forties. When they failed to achieve their goals under the changed conditions of an ebb, many became frustrated, disillusioned and pessimistic. Instead of recognizing the change in objective conditions which required new tactics and more limited goals, they blamed each other, blamed higher leadership or blamed the masses. A correct perspective could have saved some of our forces from demoralization and defection.

Another flow is sure to come. It may be quite close historically. Opportunities for political advance will multiply many times. Bold tactics of a full offensive will again be in order.

Some of our leftist errors are apparently as old as our Party itself. Other errors are the result of wrong evaluations of the objective conditions we faced in the last ten years. These latter errors must be carefully understood in relation to the conditions surrounding them or we could create a pattern in our work that will be applied rigidly into the future to the extent that some day we would look back on another period (a period of flow) and characterize our efforts as right opportunist and tailist.

## FARM UNITY NEEDED

As a result of Leftism a number of progressive farmers are bitter, subjective and inactive. They condemn even the best existing farm organizations. They see only the bad features. The physical isolation and resulting political loneliness of Left people in rural areas has a bad effect on their morale and limits their chances for collective work. But the past year has seen the rigid lines of several years ago begin to loosen and melt. Active progressive farmers are meeting

with less suspicion and fewer closed doors. We must encourage all of them to pitch in and fight for farm prosperity, peace and progress.

Unity is a major problem facing farmers. But it must be unity of small and middle farmers. It cannot include rich and corporate farmers whose interests are the opposite of the family-type farmers. This unity requires a basis. Unity for what and against whom? The key to both farm unity and farm-labor unity is an anti-monopoly position. The struggle against monopoly as the people's enemy is the broad and basic foundation for building and expanding unity. Deep study needs to be made on details of such a program.

Family-type farmers are a minority group and cannot win their battles alone. At most they control a bloc in Congress from farm states and at times can be a balance of power. They must have unity with labor to put across a program. Likewise labor must have such unity to win its battles. In this common need for farm-labor unity, the primary responsibility for initiative toward unity lies with labor.

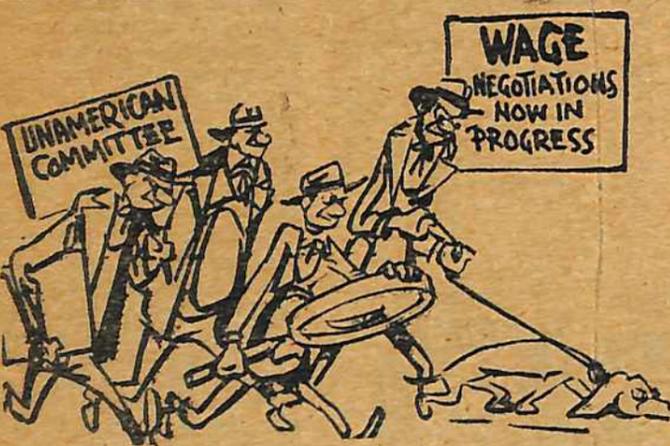
Farm unity is urgently needed. Of course it won't be easy to establish. But in the name of principle, isolated minority groups should be willing to make considerable sacrifices for the sake of organizational unity. Their courage and understanding are far more important in the mainstream of farm struggles than in small, isolated sects. It would be worth much to all concerned to end the expenditure of farmers' energy and money fighting one another.

On a broad scale we should promote work for unity of the major farm groups—Farmers Union, Grange and Farm Bureau and including lesser ones such as the Missouri Farmers Association and the new National Farm Organization. This may sound like a pipe dream at the moment. But a few years ago so would have a proposal for AFL and CIO amalgamation. The latent sentiment for unity among family-type farmers is considerable. It does present more problems than labor unity, because of the existence of rich and corporate farmers plus the membership of bankers and other non-farmers in some farm organizations. But joint action and unity on common problems will not only bear immediate fruit but is also the best path for drawing family-type farmers away from the influence of corporate farmers or bankers.

No one can predict future organizational developments among farmers. Groups may split, combine or disappear and more new ones may develop. But struggle for joint action and unity among family-type farmers everywhere is still the high road to success in fighting the current crisis and winning future battles.

considerable movement to defeat Senate Rule 22 developed. This is a crucial question in the struggle for Negro rights. The tragedy is that in the midst of these developments we are out of action. And yet, not a single question can be resolved with discussion only, it must be combined with action. Because in the

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# Party Unity Can Be Achieved

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seem inevitable—a division of the Party would be disastrous.  
**CAN UNITY BE ACHIEVED?**

Can unity be achieved? I think, yes. It is said that the differences are irreconcilable. This would mean that there are such fundamental differences on Marxist-Leninist theory that the concepts projected by different individuals have no room in the same organization—because they cannot be reconciled. I do not believe that the common ideology of Marxism-Leninism which has held us together for 37 years has vanished, and that we now face two or more fixed ideological trends in our party such as the division between Marxists and reformists in past periods.

There are certain trends which must find a place for discussion in our ranks. But seeing them, at this moment, as irreconcilable can only harm our Party. I think we have more in common among the divergent opinions than we have in disagreement.

Others refer to two sides in the party. There are sides, if you wish to call them that; that is, comrades with different viewpoints. But there are not necessarily two sides. Comrades have changed "sides" depending on issues. Many resented being typed as supporters of one side or another, because they took a public stand on a particular issue. The congealing of sides can only encourage factionalism and harm the Party's unity. An approach of establishing sides

should be rejected by our Party. This does not mean curbing discussion. On the contrary, congealing of side curbs discussion, takes away initiative from our comrades. Questions are resolved without debate but by support of a particular "side." This can lead to corroding the base of our Party—to a split. Under these circumstances we would not resolve the problems of today—let alone contribute to a broader and stronger Marxist movement in the future.

The discussion has gone through a number of stages starting with Dennis' report and the Draft Resolution. Recently the major debate centered around developments in Poland and Hungary. This is part of an overall debate to hammer out a

Marxist-Leninist position on issues as they arise.

Yet this whole discussion, over many months, has had a very important failing. We started it with the objective of seeking a way out of our isolation. This is the overall thought prevailing in the debate. How can the Party break with its sectarianism?

But this question cannot be answered in discussion alone. It must find its solution in the course of action. Now, 1956 was an important election year. Labor, the Negro people's movement and progressives generally were active. Where was our Party? With the exception of a few areas, our work was nil. Is this the way we will overcome sectarianism? The 85th Congress opens before our convention. A



## 'IT SEEMS TO ME'

(Continued from Page 1)

Communists, such historic developments will be facilitated by a strong and effective Communist Party, representative of and composed of the advanced workers—Negro and white, with a clear Marxist vision to light the way of the mass movement, spur it on through bold political initiative, and help foster its organizational activity.

### THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

A prolonged period of world peace has now become possible. World War is no longer fatalistically inevitable.

BUT—the basic aims of American imperialism remain the same. Imperialism, driven by its inner contradictions and torn by inter-imperialist rivalries, still breeds war and reaction and engenders aggression and social retrogression.

Repeatedly gambling with brink-of-atomic-war policies, the imperialist powers are repeatedly checked by the combined might of the new world system of socialist states, the growing liberation movement in colonial and semi-colonial countries, a bloc of neutral nations committed only to world peace, and the peace-minded peoples everywhere.

BUT—the present trend towards a stable period of world

peace is not irreversible. Any serious weakening of the unity of peace forces could gravely endanger the prospects for an era of peaceful co-existence.

It seems to me that from these basic truths flow some self-evident conclusions, among them being:

1. The American people's struggle to curb monopolies must be waged around the issues of foreign as well as domestic policy. For the aggressive role of Wall Street in Latin America and Africa, in supporting Rhee, Chiang and Franco, in re-arming West Germany, etc., violates and endangers the national interests and welfare of the American people, as well as the cause of world peace.

2. The strength and unity of the socialist lands, the further advance of the national liberation struggles and of all movements for social advance, are indispensable to the cause of world peace, and hence to America's real national security.

3. American Communists, champions of the national welfare, social progress and world peace, have a special obligation to resolutely promote and support all initiatives and movements for peace, and to develop a relationship of close solidarity with all peoples—non-Communists and Communists alike.

4. As for the vital question of relationships between the Marxist parties of the world, these should rest on four pillars: working class solidarity, independence and equality, comradely criticism, and the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. To undermine any one of these four pillars is to undermine the whole basis of such fraternal relations.

### THE PROSPECT BEFORE US

The motive force in American history is, has been, and remains the struggle of the exploited against the exploiters, of the oppressed against oppressors. Here, as elsewhere, the course of human events will therefore be fundamentally determined by the extent to which American labor influences national policy and ultimately leads the nation.

BUT—the American working class cannot fulfill its historic destiny unless it pursues an independent, united, and militant policy of struggle; unless it cooperates with and champions the interests of the Negro people, the working farmers, and its other allies; unless its most advanced and class-conscious section is organized in a Marxist vanguard—an effective, cohesive, democratic and fighting American Marxist working class political party—capable of influencing events and deepening labor's understanding of the class and social forces at work in the nation and the world.

New and realistic possibilities exist for a peaceful constitutional transition to socialism in our

country.

BUT—socialism can come about only through a fundamentally radical change in existing property relations, through not only curbing, but eventually breaking, the power of monopolies. A peaceful transition is possible only if the working people keep open the democratic processes for constitutional change.

Great changes are taking place in our nation and the world. Even greater changes are in the making. Consequently our Communist Party needs to broaden its working-class base and influence, put an end to dogmatism and sectarianism, make necessary changes in its structure and methods of work, drastically expand and strengthen its internal democracy and reexamine and further develop certain theoretical propositions.

BUT—this does not mean that we should exchange the scientific method of Marxism-Leninism for wishful thinking and opportunism; or replace old dogmas with new ones.

It seems to me that what is required is a re-dedication to the principles of scientific socialism, and to ensuring their concrete application and creative development in accord with American democratic and working-class traditions, experience and requirements.

What is needed is renewed mass activity on all fronts—ideological, political, economic—and the growth and unity of our

Communist Party based among other things, on: a clear recognition of the historic role of the American working class and its Marxist vanguard as the architect of socialism, as the champion of the best interests of the nation and its people, a vigorous and many-sided democratic and united front struggle to realize the immediate demands of all who toil by hand or brain; an uncompromising devotion to the struggle for equal rights and freedom for the Negro people; an appreciation of the epochal achievements and liberating role of the lands of socialism, coupled with a critical evaluation of the mistakes and shocking violations of socialist principles recently revealed there, as well as a positive attitude toward the process underway to eliminate these distortions and errors, and to prevent their recurrence—all of which prove the vitality and self-corrective role of socialist society; and on our fraternal solidarity with the working people of all countries.

It seems to me that all proposed changes in the name, form and policies of our Communist Party should be critically appraised and judged in the light of these basic truths. In any event all issues and proposals should be considered on their merits and all differences debated forthrightly, yet in a comradely fashion, in such a way as to preserve and reinforce the unity of our Party.

## Leadership Problems Facing Us

(Continued from Page 3)

tions, requires forces who devote their full time to the needs of the organization. This, as in the past, continues to be an important requirement for a working-class political organization. What was wrong was that our leadership became more centralized, and many tasks were concentrated in the hands of a few people, the pressure to solve all problems via "full-timers" was a marked tendency. Unfortunately some comrades in correctly rejecting this past practice attack the full-timers in vindictive terms as "pie-cards," etc. This is a disservice to our discussion. If the Party's overemphasis on a full-time apparatus requires correction then let us do that and not seek to victimize individuals who accepted the responsibility the organization placed on them under all difficult conditions.

Why should we de-emphasize the number of full-timers needed to participate in the Party's leadership? Firstly, because the total needs of the Party require that the smallest expenditures of funds should be in the area of administration while the greatest financial resources should be directed towards improving our mass work. Secondly, with the new concepts of the Party advanced at the last National Committee meeting as reflected in Fred Fine's report and the Draft Constitution, the more democracy in the Party and the wider the responsibility of the members carrying through Party work, the less burden will be placed on the role of an individual full-timer for fulfilling Party decisions. Thirdly, in examining our weak ties among the masses it would serve the Party's interests best if some of its most experienced personnel were to come into closer touch with the workers and help the Party in achieving new and broader mass connections. Under present political conditions many comrades who are privately employed have greater maneuverability and legality in their work among the masses.

We should study how other mass organizations function in this regard. I notice, for example, that some mass organizations employ people whose function is to serve the organization and carry out many of the administrative tasks while the decisive leaders remain privately

employed and perform a leadership role on a volunteer basis. In our organization a full-time functionary, especially on the district levels, has to combine all qualifications—organizer, administrator, political leader. With a greater division of work and decentralization of tasks many of our key political forces could perform their major assignments without being on full-time.

In taking steps to reduce the number of full-timers, the Party must do this in an organized manner. These steps be accompanied by big changes in our style of work, new approaches to Party campaigns and the development of collective leadership on all levels. If these do not accompany the shift away from the emphasis on full-timers, the Party's work may suffer.

### APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

This Party convention must bring about a whole change in our approach to leadership. In the past, comrades who were released from full-time staffs were regarded in the Party as having been "down-graded," "punished,"

"disciplined" and sent back to the shop. This attitude was one of the crassest expressions of bureaucracy in our Party. Today our Party must infuse its entire membership with the political urgency of placing its leading corps in the first place, in a position where they can more directly influence the workers and strengthen our Party's mass base. The Party organization must surround all of its forces who now have to make this kind of adjustment with the necessary help and support.

In ending past bureaucratic approaches to cadres, our Party convention must break with the long standing neglect of those forces in our ranks who have aged, and for health reasons are unable to perform in the same manner that they have in the past. Just a glance at any trade union or mass organization will show that these old-timers and builders of the people's organization continue to play a role in the mass movements. Their past contributions are recognized and their experiences utilized by the

mass organizations. Our Party has had a most callous approach to this question. As a result the Party has been denied the contributions of such comrades and many of them became unnecessarily isolated from the Party and the mass movements.

For many years growing out of the illegal status of the Party, in trade unions and mass organizations, an artificial division of labor was created between the leading Party functionary (who most frequently was fulltime) and comrades in the mass movement. The Party functionary had responsibility for all so-called Party tasks as well as for guiding our forces in mass work. The comrades on leading committees whose main task was in the mass field were primarily concerned with these phases of work and left all problems of Party building, finances, campaign and independent Party activity to the Party functionary. This wrong division of labor fed bureaucracy and centralized all Party tasks in the hands of a few functionaries. As a result of this, many experi-

enced comrades in mass work, though serving on leading committees, did not feel accountable to the Party membership for guiding all the Party work.

While the illegal status of our Party explains much of the reasons for this situation, nonetheless we are compelled to change our methods of work and achieve a relationship in all Party committees where all comrades take responsibility within the committee for all phases of the Party's work while each individual performs in accordance with his or her ability and circumstances. As we democratize our organization, methods must be worked out of bringing before the Party the views, proposals and activities of cadres whose Party life does not bring them in touch with all their members. This responsibility for reporting and accounting to the membership must be the duty of all Party leaders. Security considerations, while taken into account, cannot serve as an excuse for failing to establish correct relationships between leading committees of the Party and the membership.

A new style of work for our Party should have as its objective to put an end to the narrow, inner-Party life of a functionary. In the main this can only be accomplished by a clearer definition of the duties of all officers, the extent and limits of their responsibilities, and a new system of Party work that brings the membership into active participation in policy-making. With a broader democratic functioning of the organization and a greater decentralization of tasks, the Party must guide its actives on all levels starting with the National Committee so as to guarantee that every comrade spends time with non-Party people, and is not an "inner" worker alone.

These problems of leadership plagued us for many years, but we are closer to arriving at some solutions now as we are reviewing the concept of the Party, of establishing a new basis for work.

The Draft Constitution, the new organizational concepts of the Party, together with the new course the Draft Resolution is charting, provides for the speedy development of a wide Party cadre who will find greater basis for growth and development in the years to come.



## Name and Form Discussed

(Continued from Page 2)

maintenance, its growth. . . .

But let us keep in mind that what we are battling to maintain and to cultivate is not a name or a form, but a movement. Therefore if we feel that a change in name or form will better advance our movement, then we should make those changes. There is an understandable fear that such changes would mean an abandonment of Communist policy, of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. This could be. But we could depart from a correct policy, while still maintaining our name and form, as we have seen at times in the past. Also it is possible to maintain a correct class policy while making changes in form.

The name of a Marxist party is not a matter of principle in itself. In the 1850 the soundest Marxist program in America was advanced by the German Sports Society, THE TURNVERIEN. (Foster: History of CPUSA). The first definitely Marxist organization in America was the Proletarian League. The Communist Club of New York, the Workers' Club of Chicago were other Marxist organizations in America. Today, in other lands, as well, Marxist parties have various names. "Communist" to us means a great deal and is based on the spirit of the French Communards and the science of the writers of the Communist Manifesto, on the addition to this science by the leaders of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and on their experiences, as well as on the notable contributions and struggles of our own Communist Party.

In spite of this, and with great emotional reluctance, I think a change of name would be in the best interest of building the American Marxist movement. Some of the reasons for this are:

Firstly, if we are going to make all of the necessary changes in correcting our mistakes of the past, then such a change of name would help to dramatize these changes, to make clear that we are not just making a few "tactical" adjustments, but that we are fully capable of learning from history, of making whatever changes are necessary to help build Marxist organization.

Secondly, I feel, that we have started, are beginning and will continue to make the necessary changes and chart the right course in February. I think there are people who would be willing to and would want to associate themselves with us, but who would hesitate at inheriting some of the liabilities of the name "Communist," the legal liabilities and the liabilities in relationship to other workers. . . .

Thirdly, and part of this that I don't think we can completely overlook, is that the name "Communist Party" is also the name of the ruling party in the Soviet Union. And faced as we are with the problem of overcoming the wholly incorrect tag, "Soviet agent," might this not help?

I have no illusions that a change of name would do any miracles. . . . But if it would help our relationship with workers, make it more possible to grow, then I am for it. The building of a legal movement, while a desirable goal, is something that is not solely up to us, since the ruling class can be expected to continue to attack us. But legalizing ourselves among the people is something on which we are not altogether powerless.

### OPPOSES PARTY FORM

On the question of what form for our movement, I think that our approach should be the same—what is the best basis for fulfilling our role. We are at present, the Communist Party. I agree with those who think that the dropping of our electoral form, as a party would enhance our work. I think this for

the following reasons:

1) A political party, as it is understood by most people, is an organization that desires to bid for political power, for political office. At present, and for the last years, we have not been doing this, have not been running candidates. Largely, this is because of the host of discriminatory political laws that either forbid us outright from being on the ballot, or laws that make it next to impossible. . . . But, in addition, our political perspective is one of working to help the labor movement to achieve its political aims.

2) This has not only been true of the last few years—it will also be the case for a number of years to come. . . . Similarly, our political perspective for the next years is one of helping to build an anti-monopoly coalition, with a political realignment reflecting the anti-monopoly coalition. Whichever course unfolds, the Communists will be helping to build this coalition and its political party. Therefore our main political perspective is not of independent candidates, but of contributing our Marxist thinking in the development of such an anti-monopoly coalition and party. . . .

I think it would be more possible to win members for our movement if we state clearly our objective of influencing the thinking and actions of the labor movement, the working farmers, the Negro people and liberals generally. The people we want to influence and win will see our role much more clearly if we were a Marxist political organization and not a political party. To most Americans it is a very strange thing indeed to see a political party organized within other political parties, within trade unions, Negro people's organizations, farm organizations, etc. It helps to strengthen the notions of 'boring from within,' of our having other purposes in being in organizations other than the objectives of those organizations. I think that we can better win a citizenship for Marxist ideas if our members are in organizations for the aims of these movements, while trying to win a Marxist approach, a class approach as a more effective way of furthering their aims. Organizations like ADA, while far from Marxist, also have the avowed purpose of influencing organizations and parties for their point of view.

3) Maintaining our electoral form also creates confusion and lack of perspective within our movement. A person joins our party, we discuss work with him or her, and tell them to join another political party. At a recent state committee meeting one comrade asked: "Are we for the Communist Party or for some other political party?" We work in the Democratic Party, in the Republican Party; we are for a political realignment and an anti-monopoly party; we are discussing building the basis for a new party of socialism; and then we are a Communist Party. While we can find examples in American political history of people being members of more than one party—it still is not a fit form for our role.

I think that an association of American Marxists could not be a mere educational association, educating for socialism. It would not be Marxist if it did not fully associate itself with the day-to-day struggles of the people. It would not understand the road to socialism if it did not merge the Marxist movement with the labor movement, and the struggle against monopoly. But being a political party today belies our role, beclouds it, and helps to make it more difficult.

For the next years we are not going to be bidding for political office or power. But we are going to be bidding for a Marxist approach on immediate questions and on a socialist reorganization

## Our Crisis and the New Times

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it would be fruitless. Secondly this change is not advocated to placate reaction, but to help clarify our role in the minds of the people.

If it is a change of content (mass policy, democratization, Americanization) as well as form, then the people (those whose ear we can reach) will be able to see more clearly that the reactionary charges are in truth lies and our isolation reduced.

Such a formal, total change would in fact be a pledge to the people (of an unmistakable public kind) that we wished to set ourselves more firmly on the American road to socialism.

Moreover, such a change would conform to the realities of the situation.

At present we are not a political party in the American sense of the term: our electoral activity is insignificant and we do not seek governmental power.

What do we do in fact? We associate ourselves with the people's struggle for their immediate needs and we educate for socialism (however imperfectly).

Thus there is a contradiction between the non-party content of our work and its party form.

This contradiction lays a base for popular misunderstanding of our organization, bolsters the charge of "conspiracy" against us.

Thus people may reason: if the Communists are a party, they must seek government power, and since they do not engage in electoral activities to any degree, they must seek it by other means, "force and violence," "infiltration," etc.

Let us abandon the party form of organization so that we may better prepare the ground for a new mass movement of socialism that will help the people set our government on a path of deep-going social and economic change and improvement.

And let us better our agitation for socialism. At present we do two things: tell the people that socialism is not the issue, and point to conditions in socialist countries abroad. Perhaps we can find more convincing approaches to the American people.

The people have urgent needs (peace, integration, welfare, civil liberties, etc.) but the key to the fulfillment of these needs is labor's assumption of a greater, more independent political role, at the present moment within the confines of the present party structure.

Labor's increased political activity will be the magnetic center for a new coalition of labor, Negro people, middle-classes, farmers.

The most advanced sections of the people are already working along this path: the COPE committee of AFL-CIO, the NAACP of the Negro people, the ADA of the liberal middle class.

As socialist-minded people interested to help labor and all other elements move forward toward the emergence of a new coalition. We should associate ourselves with all popular groupings whose movement is towards this end, reducing differences to a minimum.

Change to a non-party form would facilitate and clarify our

of American society. We are going to be bidding for this in the mainstream of the people's movements. I think that we can better perform this role as an Association of American Marxists than as a Communist Party. Such an Association will also have to have an independent role—bidding for the minds of people by newspapers, books, pamphlets, meetings, etc. . . .

In addition I feel that even when the creation of a broader new party of American socialism does become possible, that there will still be the need for Marxist organization. . . .

relationship to the current mass movements. People would better understand that we are not "using" these movements as "Trojan horses" to smuggle in a socialist government by the back door, by "infiltration." Such a change would help make clear the fact that for us a new democratic coalition to ensure the peace is an end in itself, not merely a means to socialism.

### WHAT HAPPENS TO "VANGUARD ROLE"?

Some may say, "But if we give up our Party form what happens to our vanguard role?" — as though a "vanguard role" were something that we put on or take off at will, like a garment.

There will be a socialist movement that will help lead the American people towards a basic democratization of our society. The American people will give that movement, in their own good time, a "vanguard role."

Meanwhile let us not be immodest and place on our shoulders a mantle of leadership which only the people can give.

Aren't the weaknesses of Leftism and bureaucracy connected with "vanguardism"—a self-appointed leadership which imposes itself on the people from outside and above, and which therefore cannot help but make mistakes?

Let us strive to be of service to the people, then they can best judge whether we are worthy of leadership.

### COALITION, PEACE AND SOCIALISM

There is a definite connection between the movement for a native socialist perspective in this country and the movement for a new democratic coalition.

This is because the maintenance of peace guarantees the goal that the Communist movement has always set for itself in our country, namely the inauguration of socialism in the United States by constitutional means.

A hydrogen-bomb war would transform this question entirely, as well as all others.

It only takes a look at one figure—Senator McCarthy—to realize that those who would face our country towards war are

## Party Unity

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course of action, we will learn whether we are right or wrong, what has stood the test and what requires change.

Furthermore, we are trying to resolve a whole host of complex problems, all at once. We are hurling at the membership one document after another. Long resolutions and even longer discussion bulletins, both national and districts. And they deal with diverse and important subjects. Can our membership, working all day, active in the evening, absorb all this material, in such a brief time?

Must we try to solve all problems at once? Can they be resolved in such a rush? Not if we expect to involve a large section of our membership. This requires time and an opportunity to think things through. Let's settle first things first and other things a little later. We may move more slowly but go further.

Experience should have taught us that we have a tendency of swinging fast from one position to another. Let us test some of our new ideas in action. We may find it necessary to make changes as a result of our experiences. In the final analysis this is still the best proof of testing the correctness of a political line. But some say we cannot wait, time is running out. But why run ahead so fast and later have to retrace our steps as we have often done? Maybe by moving more slowly, more sure-footedly we can advance more rapidly later.

It is proposed that we examine our policy over the whole past period in our Negro work. This

the same as those who would force towards extreme reaction and tyranny that would destroy all semblance of democratic and constitutional procedure.

Moreover, a prolonged period of peace would open the way in this country for great democratic advances. The labor movement would have the opportunity to strengthen itself organizationally and politically. Great strides could be made in the struggle for full rights for the Negro people. A peaceful atmosphere would allow the development of a movement to restore the constitution and dismantle the cancerous structure of repressive legislation.

Peace will inevitably bring social and political fluidity and reform, and this is doubtless one of the main reasons that those corporation heads and financiers who shrink from the outlook of war, and for whom Eisenhower speaks, at the same time drag their feet on questions of peace, enter into relations of co-existence with extreme reluctance and maintain an ambiguous and compromising attitude towards the Nixons, Knowlands, Bridges, etc.

A policy of peaceful co-existence for the United States will not be won without great popular political struggles, struggles which will eventually succeed in reducing the political influence of the McCarthys, Knowlands and Eastlands to a minimum.

So the struggle for a new democratic coalition, for the triumph of a foreign policy of peace, is at the same time the necessary prelude to a constitutional and democratic transformation of American society in a socialist direction.

Just as the struggle for a Marxist movement that will base itself on the history and present condition of our country will help the cause of peace, so the struggle for peace will help Marxist minded Americans find their way to a native road to socialism. A Marxist movement that does not make as its prime task giving assistance to the people in the building of a new coalition will not be worth its salt, will lose itself, will wither and die.

is essential. But can we do justice to a problem of such importance at this time? It may be advisable to leave this question to a special national conference following the convention; likewise with our trade union work. This does not mean that these subjects can be ignored at the convention. They must be dealt with. But there is a difference between emphasizing them as part of an overall discussion, and dealing with them in a thorough, fundamental way.

### CONVENTION PROPOSALS

The central question remains: Can the convention resolve some issues which will help maintain Party unity and move forward? This question, I think, deserves the attention of the whole organization. The sharp division in the leadership should be resolved. At present there is little confidence in the national and district leaderships. A change in relations on top will serve the unity of the Party. Such unity now will not hamper changing

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# Experiences in National Group Work

By BILLY ALLAN

DETROIT, Mich.

With all this very healthy talk and writing about how we are re-organizing and about to reorganize ourselves from the demobilization period of the last number of years, it's been a refreshing experience to have been around when the State Committee of the Communist Party of Michigan went to work and assigned some people to work with the National Groups. That started almost two years ago, long before the present discussions.

That such a move was correct needs little elucidation. But the ripeness of the objective situation and what we learned from what happened is worth



WILLIAM ALLAN

examination. We are coming into a national convention in February 1957 with so far only one mention of work in the National Group field (Discussion Bulletin No. 2) and no mention in the Draft Resolution. Therefore the drafters of the Draft Resolution shouldn't be showered with barbs but with reports of what they missed, an important section of the American class struggle, from whose day to day activities some of our finest cadres have come and will come.

I think the American Communist movement has to dig into some history of the National Group situation in our country, otherwise we cannot understand "the pitch" and we will continue to leave that struggle out of Draft Resolutions.

## STATE BACKGROUND

In our state (Michigan) there are close to half a million national group voters, some 350,000 in Detroit. They are highly organized, members of unions, mass organizations and are splendid organizers—parents and sons and daughters. The parents are proudly known as pioneer organizers of the CIO and AFL here.

The first and second generations helped to break the back of the open shop here and who doesn't remember how 10,000 members of the International Workers Order in Michigan did sterling duty in that great series of class battles with the auto barons.

They carried over the sense of working-class responsibility to the field of political action, becoming a great part here of the New Deal, strong supporters of FDR and former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Frank Murphy.

Before the unions and the New Deal political action days, these foreign-born Americans were widely discriminated against, targets of national chauvinist epithets known to all of us. Many of the first generation couldn't speak the American language; they liked their "Old Country" culture, traditions and continued to speak the language of the "Old Country." They set up their own fraternal organizations, had their own forms of religious activity. Many of them

were exiled radicals. Socialists became members of the American Socialist Party; some later joined the American Communist Party.

Their sons and daughters were discriminated against, mocked at, attacked because of their names and parents. There were ghettos for them in many parts of this city and state (Hamtramck, biggest Polish city outside of Warsaw Delray, "Little Hungary," being one of the titles given by the ghettos).

But when the open shop was cracked and unity of the working class began to be forged by the unions, of foreign-born Americans with native-born Americans, new, aggressive, capable working-class leaders emerged.

They found a place, many of these second generation Americans in union leadership posts, in the state legislature, in other posts and their lives were no longer confined to just around where the "Old Country" people gathered—they broke out of the ghetto, they began to be full-fledged citizens with equal rights. The names which lots of them wrongly considered a liability, now were a badge to get elected to offices, because a great new mass of people with their sons and daughters had, thanks to the smashing of the open shop joined in with the great new progressive stream of labor and peoples political action.

Our movement was based here in great part on this first generation and later some of the second generation joined our ranks. But essentially the second generation whose parents were radicals moved in labor and New Deal circles.

This is where the Draft Resolution missed the boat, when it failed to give "a pitch" on how as American Marxists we can influence this new generation that in our town and state and undoubtedly in a number of other states, practically leads a big section of labor and the peoples political action movement.

## "OLD COUNTRY" SOCIALISM A BRIDGE

The new Socialist nations eliminated the rottenness of the capitalist society in the "Old Countries." Does the new Socialist society in these nations of Eastern Europe particularly, make a broader bridge for us to come and work with this second generation in the fight for peace, co-existence, Negro rights, civil rights, economic security and against the open enemy here, monopoly capital as exemplified by General Motors, Ford, Chrysler?

We have found, according to our ability to put things in motion, it does. Take a powerful visual educator like films of the "Old Country" which now has a socialist economy. A small national group here with an excellent historical film, attracted over 500 people of that nationality and the Left section was indeed in a minority in attendance.

Or take the Poles. Some weeks ago a meeting was held on the new situation in People's Poland, 247 people came and the Left was in the minority. One speaker asked everyone who thought there was no freedom in Poland to raise their hand. Two people did. Then he asked all who thought there was to raise hands. Most of the people did. A large section of DP's was present.

Each year on the annual celebration of Soviet Armenia, hundreds turn out for that event. A Hungarian "Grape" Festival, a traditional event brings several hundred even during the tense days that we are now passing through about Hungary.

The Jewish People's Chorus, an outstanding example of cultural initiative, attracts with its songs of many lands including Socialist lands, hundreds of people in our town each year.

Yes, the socialist society now

in existence in the "Old Country" is a bridge to this great new mass of second generation Americans, many of whom are leaders of the American working class both in the economic and political fields. And it's a source of great national pride to both first and second generation. Now while our drafters of the Draft Resolution may have passed up this clear-headed section of workers who are a mighty echelon for co-existence, monopoly, the people's enemy DIDN'T.

They forged a weapon, the Walter-McCarran Act—they began as part of the cold war process of isolating the American Left, to smash at this important socialist-minded echelon. Some 30,000 foreign-born Americans, first generation, have been made targets by this law. Thousands of them live in conditions of "house arrest" because of the vicious supervisory parole. This had an effect. These workers, here for decades, having raised a family, bought a home, had to decide to be less active or face impoverishment through loss of jobs or through the high costs of fighting court cases. They had pressure from their sons or daughters to "take it easy."

The decision might have been easier for many if the International Workers Order had remained standing and not just only went out of business. It was a terrific setback not to be able to keep 100,000 IWO members together. When the IWO ended its honorable services, the McCarthyites considered that one of their greatest accomplishments.

So we suffered a great body blow to the American Marxist movement—and not all the blame can be laid at the door of reaction for the knockdown. And what is disturbing is that nothing seems to be in the offing about a renaissance of this movement. But people are thinking, acting.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS NOTED

Now with the great events in the world-rising peace forces, big changes in the Socialist world, great interest prevails among first and second generation national group people about what's happening in the "Old Country."

This interest is so great that one of the capitalist newspapers here reported that some 5,000 Polish people in 1956 from March on, applied for passports to go to Poland. Come 1957, the greatest tourist trade to the socialist nations will take place—already many have booked passages months ahead because of the great desire to see the "Old Country."

All of this has had an energizing effect on the Left forces in the National Groups. Now many of them are back in harness—they are in contact with "outside" people in their national group field. They find great swirling currents of political debate raging about the "Old Country." In the recent election campaign because of big new developments, the "International Situation" was a platform everyone could mount and debate on. Both the GOP and Dems have nationality committees. Governor Williams of Michigan heads that of the Dems. Neither of the two capitalist parties thus forgot the National Groups.

Many of the DP's have come here, worked in the auto plants, saw unionism at its best, fighting speedup in many places, protecting jobs of workers, battling discrimination, fighting the great unemployment which the DP's found themselves victims of. Whatever the DP's may have been before they came, many of them think differently and are now part of the working class. This is a field for exploration by Marxists.

The Left and its press must begin to objectively report, comment and give guidance to this changing world in the national group field. English writing in the Nationality press is a must,

or the second generation becomes target for the brass-check press of Hearst and his fellow defenders of monopoly.

This Nationality press cannot become "house organs" for the "Old Country." Yes, it can relate and be a champion of peaceful co-existence and also tell of what goes on, but it cannot be an American reprint.

The Daily Worker and Worker have to get off their lofty perch and see this great new world of developments among America's millions of national group people, first and second generation. The Daily Worker has never crusaded against the Walter-McCarran law—despite the truth that if it hadn't been for the national groups—the DW might

not have today been in existence.

A section of the Michigan Party organization in the last two years has been in the midst of these developments, discussions and discoveries. We have built a whole new part of the Party that is loyal, devoted to Marxism-Leninism.

It's a challenging area of Party work. It calls for great ideological alertness, for the most flexible forms of united front and coalition tactics as the hard and fast divisions of the old days melt under new developments both at home and in the "Old Country."

Through the American and Nationality Press, the Left can speak to thousands from coast to coast. I think it's time, history says so, that the American Communist Party starts organizing among the National Groups.

Let's Get Wise, Organize.



## Party Unity

(Continued from Page 7)

and refreshing of the new committees. Our Party does not dismiss the role and responsibility of leadership. Nihilistic tendencies of "kick out the whole leadership" is not the prevailing sentiment. A desire for a change, electing new people into the National Committee is strong.

The present leadership is essential for adequate preparation for the convention. Irresoluteness and inability to find a common basis for unity is not a virtue. If it cannot take place—then we face the consequences of a sharp division with dire results. I maintain, we can avoid heading in such a direction.

Some of the discussion by members of leading committees leaves much to be desired. Evidently, we have difficulty in debating sharply, yet not irreconcilably. It is hard to learn when there is little past experience. There is too much subjectivity in our leading ranks. It is a luxury which a leadership cannot indulge in. At times a thin line separates subjective feeling from objective analysis. For instance, some lay more stress on the mistakes from 1945 to 1950, while others emphasize the latter period to 1955. The important thing is to state specifically the major mistakes over the whole period—so that we can all learn from these mistakes. Some of us held responsibility in one period, while others in another period. Let's examine the mistakes we all made and let the Party learn

and draw its conclusions. In some cases stress is given to the mistakes made nationally, and little as to what the district did. This will not solve anything. Such placing of blame is not critical and does not help us.

I think this wrong approach is also true of the Daily Worker. Its editors give more emphasis to points which agree with their position, and less with those in disagreement. That there are disagreements and discussion is necessary is self-evident. Differences must eventually be resolved, and a Marxist paper should help stimulate such resolution. But on many questions the position of the editors is different from that of large sections of its readers. To contribute to unity a Marxist newspaper should take that more into consideration.

I think we should direct our main attention to overcome this situation at the national convention. This is now aided by the resolution on unity adopted by the December meeting of the National Committee and addressed to all clubs and conventions of the Party. In my opinion the National Committee resolution or similar expressions of unity should come forth from all conventions. They can serve to create a spirit of unity at this convention. This will make it possible for us to come out united and to move ahead with the necessary changes required to help overcome our isolation and move forward.

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