

# PROCEEDINGS

16th NATIONAL  
CONVENTION  
COMMUNIST  
PARTY, U.S.A.

February 9-12, 1957



NOTE

**PROCEEDINGS (abridged)**  
*of the 16th*  
**NATIONAL CONVENTION**  
*of the*  
**COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.**

---

*New York, N. Y.*

*February 9-12, 1957*

## NOTE

It has been the effort in this volume to give as complete a picture of this widely reported Convention as space limitations would permit. In the following pages are all the documents of the Convention: the Convention call, the resolutions adopted, the Constitution, etc.; the full text of the speeches of Eugene Dennis and William Z. Foster; virtually the full text of all Committee reports.

In abridging the proceedings, every speech in the substantive discussion has been kept. Since the transcript was prepared from tape recordings, it has not been possible to identify every speaker in the discussion. The use of first names only by a number of delegates is at their own request in order to avoid endangering their jobs in private employment.

—EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

*Communist Party, U.S.A.,  
23 West 26th Street,  
New York 10, N. Y.*

---

*Published by* NEW CENTURY PUBLISHERS, INC.

832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.

May, 1957

 209

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

## Contents

	PAGES
Press Coverage of the Convention	iv
The Communist Party Convention ( <i>An Editorial</i> )	5
Call to the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party of the United States	12
Proceedings (abridged) of the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., February 9-12, 1957	
Sessions of February 9, 1957	15
Sessions of February 10, 1957	68
Sessions of February 11, 1957	126
Sessions of February 12, 1957	195
Main Political Resolution of the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A.	253
Resolution on Social-Democracy	329
Constitution of the Communist Party, U.S.A.	335
Draft Plan of Work	345
Statement of Observers	349
Greetings	351

## Press Coverage of the Convention

The 16th National Convention of the Communist Party received the widest coverage of any gathering in Party history. The Convention Press Committee—Simon W. Gerson, chairman, Abner W. Berry, both of New York; William Allan, Detroit, and Al Richmond, San Francisco—accredited a total of 70 correspondents from newspapers, weekly magazines, radio and television.

The correspondents included representatives of the great national wire services, the Associated Press, the United Press and the International News Service; foreign wire services, e. g., the Italian News Agency (ASNA), the Soviet News Agency (TASS) and the Polish press service (Polpress), all the great metropolitan dailies of New York and a number of reporters from nationally-known newspapers located in other cities. Several small-city newspapers were also represented. The great TV and radio networks were likewise represented by full crews.

Since about 50 per cent of the convention delegates worked in shops, there was considerable feeling that in the current political atmosphere publication of their names would result in loss of jobs. With that consideration in mind, the convention decided for a policy of detailed briefing of correspondents in the press room but against their admission on the convention floor.

At the same session, the delegates voted to admit to the floor a group of non-Communist observers.

Briefings were held frequently, with every major convention development promptly reported to the press room. Texts of major speeches, reports and resolutions were swiftly supplied to the press corps, as were breakdowns on convention votes. Members of the Convention Press Committee were constantly available and questioned and cross-examined by the newspapermen on details. Requests of newspapermen from various cities were filled wherever possible. A number of special interviews, requested by TV representatives, were held by Party leaders.

Besides the briefing by the press committee, the non-Communist observers were available to the press corps, which had an opportunity to check the briefings against the notes of the observers.

Within the limits of the situation, the press corps, on the whole, felt it received a fair total picture of the convention.

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY CONVENTION

(An Editorial reprinted from *Political Affairs*, April 1957)

THE RECENT National Convention of the Communist Party was undoubtedly one of the most critically important gatherings ever held by the Communist movement in this country. Paradoxically, this convention—held at a time when the Communist Party is weaker organizationally than it has been in many years—received infinitely more spotlighting and publicity throughout the country than almost any of its conventions in history. Such publicity is not accorded by the politically-competent capitalist press of our country to a movement that no longer has any impact upon the scene.

The challenge that faced this Convention was, in a new form, the same general one that has been met by the Party at other critical moments in the past—the challenge of responding to major changes in conditions.

\* \* \*

The founding convention of the Communist Party met in 1919 under the influence of such tremendous events as the first socialist revolu-

tion, the end of the first World War, and the failure of the socialists in Germany. The founding of the Workers Party in December, 1921, unified the various Communist groups and marked the Party's emerging out of the worst infantile sectarianism and the state of illegality brought about by the Palmer raids.

The Seventh Convention of the Party in June, 1930, following the defection of the Trotskyite-Cannon group and the Right-opportunist group led by Jay Lovestone, took place at a time when the economic crash had already unmasked the false theories of the "new capitalism," "permanent prosperity," etc., and had demonstrated the Party's ability to give leadership to the masses as exemplified in the historic March 6th demonstrations of the unemployed. And though the Party had been reduced to only 7,000 dues-paying members, the morale of the Party was high and it confidently faced the future, more consolidated ideologically than ever before in its history. Its subsequent growth of in-

fluence and numbers justified this confidence.

In July 1945 the Party found it necessary to adjust its line to the realities of the situation immediately following World War II, correcting errors of revisionism put forward by Browder. The Party emerged from the situation with its organization and the bulk of its membership intact, with strong ties to important sections of the labor movement, the Negro people, intellectuals, and others.

\* \* \*

The present Convention in its turn was faced with the necessity also of adjusting to a new situation, a situation resulting basically from the great changes following World War II. This situation has perhaps best been summed up in the proposition that the emergence of socialism as a world system is the chief feature of our present era.

Within the country, the atmosphere has likewise changed considerably from that at the height of the Korean War when the last Convention took place. Since then McCarthyism reached its peak and was driven back by the American people. Geneva has raised the hopes for peaceful coexistence as a practical goal. The AFL and CIO have been re-united after nearly 20 years of chronic split, and the liberation struggle of the Negro people has taken on a new dimension.

Yet, in contrast to the past conventions referred to, the Party this time found itself facing a most severe crisis. This crisis was described

in the words of the convention resolution as follows:

It is necessary for all members of the Communist Party to face up soberly to the fact that in this period the Party suffered heavy organizational losses, declined in political influence in many areas of work, became dangerously isolated from important sectors of the labor and people's movement, is confronted with the jeopardizing of the Marxist press, and that in general the Party is faced with a serious crisis of a political, ideological and organizational nature.

It seems to us that the gravity of the crisis was occasioned largely by the fact that this time the Party was exceedingly late in coping with the changed situation. For years its most authoritative leadership had been in jail or scattered, and the Party as a whole subjected to the most massive and brutal attack by every agent of the capitalist class and government.

Inevitably when the Party reassembled its leadership at the beginning of 1956, not all sectors, either in the leadership or among the membership, fully or immediately realized the gravity of the situation. To be sure there were exaggerations as regards some errors, and underestimation of the Party's past achievements and positive role, but in time the overwhelming majority of the Party, despite its pride in its great contributions and many achievements, had to face up to the crisis. The above section of the resolution adopted by overwhelming vote of the



## THE COMMUNIST PARTY CONVENTION

7

convention shows that the Party was ready to meet the situation.

\* \* \*

Without recognition of the seriousness of the situation it would have been impossible to seek out its deeper roots and to lay the basis for overcoming it. In the year-long discussion and at the Convention there were wide differences of emphasis as to the causes, some laying the stress on the objective situation and the attacks against the Party, others on the Party's sectarian errors. The resolution of the convention summed it up as follows:

Was it inevitable that the Party should become so isolated and suffer such organizational and political losses as it did? The answer must be NO. Against the background of the objective situation and its consequences, the errors and long-standing weaknesses of our Party had a particularly damaging effect. . . .

In correcting such errors, the Resolution points out:

In our struggle for a mass policy we base ourselves on the following Marxist-Leninist propositions:

a) that both Left-sectarianism and Right-opportunism have objective roots in reality—in the system under which we live;

b) that the struggle must be conducted on both fronts, with the main emphasis against that which threatens the Marxist line of our Party at the given moment.

The most important mistakes made in the period under review were Left-sectarian in character. These Left-sectarian mistakes, in the context of sharp

attack against the Party, are the main reason for the unprecedented degree to which it was possible for Big Business and its political representatives to isolate the Party.

To end its isolation and expand its mass work, the main task of the Party today is to overcome completely the influence of Left-sectarian estimates, policies and tactics in all fields of work.

In the process of carrying out the main task, the Party must struggle against existent Right-opportunist tendencies, combatting them at all times. This is especially necessary in view of the extremely sharp turn which the Party is now making in many of its basic policies. The necessary struggle against Right-opportunist errors must be carried on in such a way as not to weaken the main task.

The impact of the Khrushchev revelations was a major factor throughout the year-long discussion that culminated in the Convention. These revelations of the harmful effects of the Stalin policies over a long period of time, only served to emphasize what was becoming clear to many in the Party—the need to put an end to uncritical attitudes towards the views of Marxists of other countries. Needless to say, the shocking disclosures also had—if only temporarily—a tendency to disorient some, at the same time that they caused many to deepen their thinking.

The heart of the Convention's analysis as to the causes for the "serious crisis of a political, ideological and organizational nature," that which constitutes the basis for the "new course" and without which

the crisis could not have been met, is contained in the following passage of the resolution:

The roots of these errors are not to be found in the events of the past ten years alone.

The Marxist movement in our country has suffered historically from dogmatic application of Marxist theory to the American scene. The Communist Party inherited these weaknesses. Insufficient development of the independent theoretical work of the Party over the past decades has contributed towards our doctrinaire acceptance and mechanical application of many theoretical propositions.

Our Party also suffered from an oversimplified approach to and uncritical acceptance of many views of Marxists and Marxist parties in other countries.

Bureaucratic methods of leadership, failure to develop inner-Party democracy and a frequent intolerant attitude to the people we worked with have been in large measure responsible for our inability to correct mistakes in time as well as for much of our sectarianism. All these factors are inter-related; each helped to reinforce the other.

This is far from a routine or superficial analysis. A careful study of these conclusions and a review of the Party's past experience will show that here are some fundamental, new propositions. They serve to explain why the Party has repeatedly made the same mistakes and not corrected them in time, and at the same time provide the key to the successful outcome of the Convention and a substantial basis for facing the future with confidence.

This new approach is already embodied in the Convention documents. All the major decisions of the Convention reflect this new thinking. As regards the approach to theory this can be seen in the Preamble to the Party Constitution which states:

The Communist Party bases its theory generally on the democratic heritage of mankind and particularly on the principles of scientific socialism as developed by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and V. I. Lenin. These universally valid principles, the Communist Party of the U.S.A. interprets, applies and strives to develop further in accordance with the requirements of the American class struggle, democratic traditions and customs.

As regards relationship to Marxists of other countries, the resolution declares:

. . . The Communist Party recognizes that over the years it held certain wrong and oversimplified concepts of what its relations should be to other Marxist parties. The Party tended to accept uncritically many views of Marxists in other countries. Not all these views were correct; some did not correspond to American conditions. The Party also viewed uncritically developments in the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. It mistakenly thought that any public criticism of the views or policies of the Marxist parties of these countries would weaken the bonds of international working-class solidarity or bring comfort to the enemies of peace and socialism.

In abandoning the earlier idealis-

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY CONVENTION

9

tic and uncritical attitude towards the lands of socialism, while recognizing their historic role and achievements, the Party has strengthened its ability to promote true proletarian internationalism.

This new, creative approach and broader understanding of theory has already resulted in the elaboration of many policies in a new way. The new emphasis on peaceful coexistence as a *practical possibility* has broadened the approach to the struggle for peace. The American Road to Socialism, while put forward in earlier years, including the idea of peaceful transition, likewise takes on more content and reality. The Party now places the struggle for an anti-monopoly coalition as its main strategic aim along that path. And from such a coalition which could break the power of the traditional enemies of the American people—the monopolies—it believes the American people could advance in a constitutional, democratic and peaceful transition to socialism.

Addressing itself also to the problem of the unification of progressive and socialist-minded currents among the American people, the Convention also adopted a new attitude towards social democracy, noting the differentiation within its ranks, viewing its supporters as potential allies in the labor and anti-monopoly struggle instead of, as in the past, as bearers of a trend which was to be organizationally defeated and liquidated.

Likewise it recognized the possibility of a number of parties of socialism existing side by side and

affirmed the perspective and aim of an eventual united Marxist party of socialism.

\* \* \*

To those who kept themselves informed of the progress of the discussion, including the various articles that have been published in *Political Affairs*, and have pondered the sharp differences, the proposals for far more drastic changes, and on the other hand the charges of revisionism, it may come as a surprise that such a high degree of unity was reached at the Convention. Certainly the enemies of the Party had engaged in considerable speculation on the inevitability of a split at the Convention. At the same time, within the Party, many had feared that the Party would be liquidated in one form or another and its basic theoretical foundation—Marxism - Leninism — abandoned, while others despaired of the capacity of the Party to break with its old sectarian policies and practices and chart a new course in line with the needs of the present situation.

Some have drawn the conclusion that there was no real unity achieved but instead a compromise of principle. We do not believe this is borne out by the facts. If argument and debate does not have the purpose of reaching agreement through arriving at a more correct and acceptable view than that held previously by each proponent, then what would be the use of conventions and collective discussions altogether? Thus, basing themselves on the main line of the Draft Resolution, the Con-

vention strengthened the Resolution, rounding out certain propositions which had tended towards one-sidedness. The new draft constitution was also adopted with only minor changes.

On the much-discussed question of name and form, the Convention took the following position:

This convention goes on record to affirm the continuation of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. Our chief task is to strengthen, rebuild and consolidate the Communist Party and overcome its isolation.

This convention opposes the transformation of the Party into a political or educational association.

Although we oppose endless debate on this question, this should not close the door to all constructive exploration and discussion of the subject as may be organized by the incoming National Committee.

We recognize that some ideas have been brought forward in this discussion that are revisionist in character. However, it would be wrong to label all proposals for change in name and form as revisionist per se.

These actions do not represent compromise, but instead principled agreement.

Not the least among the reasons for the high degree of unity was the conscious desire of the delegates to unite the Party and avoid the dangers of a split or of continuing factionalism. But the factors that made the unity possible were: first, the new approach to theory which loosened the rigidity with which the membership had been trained to regard theo-

retical and political questions; second, the opportunity in the course of the discussion to test ideas against the events actually transpiring in the world; and third, the growing democratization of the Party which had already been under way in the course of the whole discussion without waiting for its practices to be formalized in the new constitution at the convention.

Thus, the lengthy discussion had been the most democratic in the Party's history and the Convention in which it culminated was likewise the most democratic ever held by the Party. It was the democratic character of the convention that made the biggest impression upon the non-Communist observers who, while having reservations and mixed opinions on other aspects, bore witness publicly to its democracy.

The early announcement that the constitution would formalize the right of dissent likewise played a major role in encouraging the membership to examine all questions boldly, free from a dogmatic or doctrinaire approach, testing their opinions in life and recognizing the possibility of honest differences on questions within a united Party. The new Constitution confirmed and guaranteed the advances in inner-Party democracy. This was further demonstrated in the direct representation in the national leadership given to the State organizations.

The Convention, by its very nature and the issues that had to be debated and settled in a short four days, was unable to give adequate

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY CONVENTION

II

attention to a proposed program of action or to the tasks in connection with saving the Marxist press, especially the *Daily Worker* and the *Worker*. Nevertheless the various resolutions and documents adopted by the Convention add up to a general program of struggle. This is true regarding the general line towards an anti-monopoly coalition, the resolution in support of the historic struggle of the Negro people for freedom and equality, and the resolution in support of labor's struggle for improved economic conditions.

That these struggles are growing in dimensions needs no extended demonstration. The struggle in the South is taking on new features as the white supremacists more and more find their legal resources exhausted, and move in the direction of increasing violence. In regard to this question the Convention in numerous ways dramatized its emphasis on the task of winning full citizenship for the Negro people in the South as the Nation's Number One Democratic Task. A new and broad anti-labor offensive is shaping up in state and national legislation and the demonstration of 10,000 workers from all over the state at Indianapolis, shows that labor, even if belatedly, is beginning to mobilize. The recent farmers' strike in the New York milk-shed has again dramatized the chronic depressed situation of the farmers. The events of Academic Freedom Week show a new

stirring among the students.

The decisions of the Convention, when mastered by the leadership and membership of the Party, should equip them to give support to these and kindred struggles in a new way, that will ultimately result in the overcoming of the Party's isolation from the basic organizations of labor and the people. The struggle against right-to-work laws, the issues arising from the Senate labor investigations, the struggle in the South and the fight for civil rights legislation, are all fields where the Party can doubtless play a constructive, vanguard role.

Many questions brought up in the course of the discussion, of course, remained unresolved. Some of the theoretical questions will undoubtedly receive further study in preparation for the Party program that is to be worked out in the coming year. Others will, of course, be the subject of continued examination in theory and practice by the organizations of the Party. But it seems clear that the Party has taken a decisive step forward in grappling with the new situation and has taken the correct road towards re-establishing its position as an American Marxist working-class party dedicated to socialism and re-establishing its ties with the labor and people's movement. In this as in its entire work, we believe the Convention has made a contribution to the American working class and people.

# CALL

## OF THE 16th NATIONAL CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

February 9-12, 1957

TO ALL PARTY DISTRICTS  
TO ALL STATE COMMITTEES  
TO ALL PARTY SECTIONS  
TO ALL PARTY CLUBS

*(To be read at all club meetings)*

Dear Comrades:

Greetings!

The National Committee summons the Communist Party of the USA to its 16th National Convention in New York City on February 9 - 12, 1957.

This convention takes place against the background of profound change on the world scene and many favorable developments at home.

A new world situation and a new relationship of forces have come into being. America is part of this vast process of change. A gigantic united labor movement has been born, a tower of growing strength in the whole democratic struggle. The Negro people are on the march as they have not been since Reconstruction days. Together with many white citizens they are writing new imperishable pages in the history of the fight for American freedom. Atomic energy and new technological developments are revealing unprecedented possibilities of peaceful progress and a life of abundance for all.

Monopoly capital in the United States presses its onslaught against the living standards of our countrymen, against the dignity and freedom of the Negro and other peoples victimized by racist oppression, against the Bill of Rights and true representative government; but the democratic labor and people's forces of America are moving forward with a power and tempo that assure the triumph of freedom and security in our land.

The American people stand on the threshold of great democratic advance. In crossing this threshold—and it can be crossed only by the most determined and united struggle—there is lost ground to be recovered as well as ground to be won. There are new vistas of peace; of a successful struggle against poverty and economic insecurity; of progress in housing,

## CALL TO THE 16th NATIONAL CONVENTION

13

health and education; of securing full citizenship for the Negro people, undoing the evils of McCarthyism and Eastlandism, and achieving new gains for democracy.

As we look back to December 1950 when the last convention of the Communist Party was held, we can see how far our country and the world have moved. Yet, despite this favorable new situation our Party will not be able to play its role unless it corrects past errors and strengthens its ties with the American working-class and people's movement. Our Party is at the most critical juncture of its history.

Largely in response to these developments as well as the revelations of serious weaknesses and injustices in the Socialist world, the entire membership of our Party is engaged in spirited debate around our theory, policies, program and organizational forms.

The Constitution of our Party provides that "Regular National Conventions shall be held every two years." However, the sustained repressive measures directed against our Party during recent years, in violation of our country's Constitution and Bill of Rights, have made it impossible for us to hold a regular convention since 1950. The decision to call this 16th National Convention was made by unanimous vote of the National Committee at its meeting in August, 1956.

In preparation for the coming convention, the fullest democratic discussion should be organized in all Districts, leading Committees and Clubs. The National Draft Resolution and other pre-Convention materials should be given the widest possible distribution among all members, and also among other workers who are or have been in close association with our Party. Special means should be devised to assure that the opinions of those unable to attend Party meetings are registered in the discussions.

\* \* \*

In accord with provisions of our Party's Constitution (Article III, Sec. 4; Article IV, Sec. 1; Article VII, Sec. 2), representation at the 16th National Convention shall be on the following basis:

- 1) Delegates shall be elected on the basis of membership, to be determined by average dues payments through the first ten months of 1956 (i.e., through October). Dues standing for this period will be determined on January 1st. Special provision will be made to allot added delegates on the basis of further dues payments for this 10-month period which are received prior to February 1st. Delegates to the National Convention shall have been members in continuous good standing for at least two years.

14 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

- 2) Each District Party organization shall be entitled to elect:
  - a) 2 delegates where the total membership is 50 or less;
  - b) 3 delegates for the first 100 members, and 3 for each additional 100 members up to 600; and
  - c) 2 delegates for each additional 100 members above 600.
- 3) In the case of Districts which are financially unable to send their full complement of delegates to the Convention, the number of votes to which each such District is entitled shall be divided among those of its delegates who attend, in such manner as the District Convention shall decide.
- 4) Each District shall have the right to elect alternate delegates, with voice but without vote. The number of such alternates shall not exceed 25 percent of the total number of delegates to which the District is entitled.
- 5) In order to help defray the expenses of the National Convention, a Convention assessment shall be levied on each Party member as follows: \$2.00 for employed members; 50c for unemployed members and housewives.

\* \* \*

District Party organizations shall determine the time, place and basis of representation for the local conventions (i.e., section, region, county, state, etc.) to be held within their several Districts. It is recommended that Section and District conventions be held, as a minimum; and that District conventions take place no later than the weekend of January 26th.

All Sections and District conventions shall be held in two parts—one prior to and the other after the National Convention. Part I, prior to the National Convention, shall be devoted to discussion of the Draft Resolution and supplementary documents, evaluation of the work and leadership of the Party organization involved, and election of delegates. Part II, after the National Convention, shall be devoted to discussion of reports on the National Convention, setting forth perspectives of work, and election of leadership.

The problems confronting our Party are formidable; but they can be solved. We are confident that our members, who have shown exemplary devotion and courage during these trying years, will be fully able to cope with the tasks our Party must now undertake.

Comradely,

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.  
Communist Party, U.S.A.  
New York, N. Y.



# PROCEEDINGS

## OF THE 16th NATIONAL CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

(abridged)

February 9-12, 1957

### Sessions of the Convention

#### OPENING SESSION

February 9, 1957

*Fred Fine, Chairman, Pre-Convention Arrangements Committee, in the Chair.*

*Chairman:* The Convention will come to order. We will open our proceedings with the singing of the Star Spangled Banner. [The delegates join in singing the National Anthem.] We would now like to call upon the Chairman of the host state organization, the New York state organization of our Party, to make a few welcoming remarks. Comrade George Blake Charney, Chairman of the New York District and a Smith Act defendant. (Applause)

*George Blake Charney (New York):* Comrade delegates and guests, I have the honor on behalf of the Communist Party of New York and as the gray-bearded patriarch of the organization, to welcome you to our 16th National Convention. I would it were the

mayor of our city who would perform this honor. But after recent experiences in our town I am afraid it would create some confusion here and in Washington and serve no useful purpose.

Were we in City Hall, we would welcome all those heroes of Spain and its noble Republican fighters, and not the agents of Franco. Yes, we would greet King Saud—and not on behalf of the oil trusts—as did our President but with the aim of fostering the aspirations of the peoples of the Middle East for peace and national independence, and to give our maximum encouragement to achieve friendly relations between the Arab nations and Israel so that both can prosper.

I said *if* we were in City Hall. We are not. Time was, as you comrades recall, when we had two Communists in the City Council who performed their duties with great distinction and authority. I refer to Ben Davis and Pete Cacchione. (Ap-

plause.) I venture the prediction, comrades, that time will be again when Communists will sit in the legislative bodies of our country, serve as leaders of the trade union movement and in the people's organizations, and serve as honored leaders of our community.

We of New York are a great metropolitan community, responsive to every development the world over and especially the yearning for a stable and lasting peace. We are a community because of the very nature of our city with its large working class population, nationality and religious ties, its great center of Negro life and culture in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant, its millions of Jewish people, the expanding Puerto Rican community, large segments of all groups moving forward at times together in the fight for democracy and better living.

On behalf of the New York delegates and our entire membership I extend the warmest welcome to the delegates. I hope that at our next convention the delegates will be handed the keys to the City of Chicago by our fellow delegate from that great city, and its distinguished citizen, Claude Lightfoot. Thank you.

*Chairman:* In our efforts to keep the proceedings as streamlined as possible so that we may get to the bulk of our convention business with

despatch, I will introduce without further ado, the National Chairman of our Communist Party, Comrade Wm. Z. Foster, to officially open the convention.

*Wm. Z. Foster:* Comrades, the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party of the United States is officially declared open. My remarks are going to be very brief. It seems to me that this is one of the most important conventions our Party has ever held, and I think we are all of that opinion. There is just one thing that is happening in connection with this convention that I think we'd all do well to pay attention to. And that is the extreme importance with which the bourgeois press of the country is handling this convention. Now there's a lesson in that for us and the big lesson it seems to me is that these people realize how tremendously important our Communist Party is here in the United States in spite of our recent reverses. I think in fact in this respect they have a more lively appreciation of the importance of our Party than some of us ourselves do. Comrades, you want to bear one thing in mind. The Communist Party is not just another Party. The Communist Party is a very vital institution and is part of the whole world movement which is building socialism in the world.

That's how they look upon us.

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

17

Even in this great stronghold of capitalism they know how vitally important the Communist Party is. Of course the bourgeois press is doing its best to disorganize and confuse our ranks, sort of bore from within or without, to try to disrupt us with all sorts of fantastic stories about pro-Stalin groups and anti-Moscow groups and what not. But I'm sure we're not going to be disoriented by such stuff. And another thing they're very anxious about in connection with this convention is to see that our Party is split at this convention. They're hoping for that. Nothing could please the bourgeoisie of America more than for a split to take place in the ranks of the Communist Party. That would indeed be a real victory for them. I think I can express the opinion of everybody here that there is not going to be any split at this convention (applause).

Comrades, in conclusion, let me just say this. This convention I believe is going to take long steps towards clarifying the matters we have been discussing over the past year and undoubtedly will go down in the record of our Party as a unity convention. I think this is the sense in which we should carry on our work in the convention (applause).

*Ch.:* At this point, on behalf of the conventions arrangement committee I think the convention would want to join with the National Committee in expressing its appreciation

to the management of this hall for having rendered a service to the constitutional liberties of all Americans by making this hall available to our convention at a time when over 100 different hotels and halls in the City of New York refused to give a lease for our convention. I propose that we express our appreciation (applause). At this time it would be customary to read the official Call to the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A.\*

A motion has been made and seconded that we dispense with the reading of the Call due to the fact that all delegates here have read the content. Are we ready to vote? The question has been called. [Vote taken.] So ordered.

At this time I want to introduce the Temporary Rules Committee which has been functioning in the last couple of days on the eve of the convention making the necessary preliminary preparations for today's organizing session. The co-chairmen of the temporary Rules Committee are Comrade Carl Winter, the State Chairman of the Party of the state of Michigan, and Comrade Claude Lightfoot, the State Chairman of the Party of the state of Illinois. Together with these two comrades the committee consists of Comrade Benjamin J. Davis of our National Committee, Comrade George Blake Charney,

\* The Call to the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., appears on p. 12.

Comrade Sid Stein, and Comrade Fred Fine (myself). I ask that this committee step forward and that Comrade Winter take over for the rest of our business.

*Carl Winter (Michigan):* Comrades, I should like to propose, first, the election of a chairman for this organizing session of our convention. The Temporary Rules Committee puts in nomination the name of the State Chairman of the Illinois Party, Comrade Claude Lightfoot. The proposal has been moved and seconded. [Vote taken.] The motion is carried.

*(Claude Lightfoot, Illinois in the Chair.)*

*Chairman:* Comrades, the first order of business will be a report for the Temporary Rules Committee by Comrade Winter.

*Winter:* Comrades, there are many aspects to this report which we will ask you to act upon seriatim. The Temporary Rules Committee has made every effort possible, after discussion with many of the heads of delegations, and others from the various parts of the country, to organize this convention in the most efficient manner possible so that we may have the maximum discussion on the political problems which we are here to solve. The personnel for various committees results from a canvass of delegations and a careful consideration of both the need for

expediting work and of guaranteeing the maximum expression of various points of view on questions that will be under discussion. I should like first to propose that we elect a parliamentarian who will help us in the solution of any knotty problems that will arise in the operation of the convention. We propose the election as parliamentarian throughout this convention of Nat Ganley of the Michigan district.

*Ch.:* [Motion made, seconded and carried unanimously] So ordered. Will the parliamentarian take his place.

*Winter:* Secondly, we propose the election of four tellers for the counting of record votes, namely, Phil Shatz of Michigan, Lester Davis of Illinois, George Sandy of New Jersey and Robert of New York. I move the election of these four tellers. [Vote taken — unanimous.] The committee proposes four convention secretaries—they are Esther E. (New York), Geraldine Lightfoot (Illinois), John Hellman (Montana), and Anna Correa (Colorado). I move the election of these four secretaries.

*Ch.:* Is there a second to the motion? [Vote taken — unanimous.] So ordered. Will the secretaries take their places.

*Winter:* The Committee now moves the seating of all delegates who have been admitted to the con-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

19

vention floor with official delegates cards to participate as temporarily seated delegates until this convention hears and acts upon the official Credentials Committee report.

*Ch.:* Is there a second to the motion? Any discussion? [Vote taken—unanimous.]

*Winter:* Now I should like to call your attention to the fact that each delegate has received in his kit of convention material a copy of the proposed convention agenda and rules. It should be noted in considering the rules and agenda that the plans for this convention have been made with a view to assuring the maximum possible participation of all delegates through the convening of large committee sessions for exchange of opinion and formulation of proposals relative to the main sections of the Draft Resolution and main features of the Draft Constitution, which have been discussed thruout the Party these past several months. The convention will hold general sessions with all delegates participating simultaneously for the purpose of hearing reports based upon these committee discussions, and will act upon final questions to be determined by the convention as a whole, in these general sessions. The main work of this convention however, is to take place in these committee meetings, which should distill the best thinking of our Party

as represented through the delegates and present conclusions for the action of the convention as a whole. Each delegation will have the task of apportioning its members among the various committees.

Now before we proceed to act upon the proposed agenda I should now like to read on behalf of the Committee the Rules which it proposes shall govern the operation of all sessions. You have a copy in your kit, of the proposed rules:

*Winter:* Now comrade chairman, I should like to propose the adoption of these rules, as proposed, by the Temporary Rules Committee.

### PROPOSED RULES

1. The Convention shall be called to order at 10 a.m. on each of the four days. There shall be two sessions on Saturday—one in the morning and one in the afternoon; three sessions each on Sunday and Monday—morning, afternoon and evening; and two sessions on Tuesday, the concluding day, with the aim of adjourning at 6 p.m.  
Sessions shall be from 10 to 1:30; 2:30 to 6; and 7 to 10 p.m.
2. Main body of hall reserved for delegates and alternates; visitors occupy rear of hall.
3. Delegates desiring to speak shall come to floor microphones and will be recognized by the chairman in order of appearance, alternating between the various floor microphones. Five minute limit on all floor discussion unless extended by action of the Convention. No delegate shall speak more than once on the same question until all who wish to be heard have spoken.
4. Votes calling for a division of the house shall be taken by a show of delegates cards. Only regular delegates may vote. By arrangement of the chairmen of the delegations and the credentials committee,

accredited alternate delegates may substitute for regular delegates absent. In all other cases, accredited alternates shall have voice but no vote in general and committee sessions. On major questions votes will be tallied by the chairman of each delegation—for, against and abstentions, and the delegation chairman will report the vote to the tellers. Suspension of Convention rules requires a two-thirds vote.

5. All resolutions must be submitted to the appropriate committee by 2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 9th. No Resolutions can be submitted directly to the floor without having been acted upon by the appropriate convention committee first.

6. A motion shall not be open for discussion until it has been seconded by a delegate and stated from the Chair.

7. A motion to lay on the table shall not be debatable.

A motion to reconsider shall not be entertained unless by a delegate who voted in the majority, and shall receive a majority vote.

Previous question shall be decided by majority voice vote.

No motion, or resolution shall be voted upon until the mover or the introducer has had a chance to speak, if he or she desires.

8. Amendments. No amendment can be accepted by the Chair which changes the basic intent of the main motion. Any proposal that conflicts with the intent of the main motion of a reporting sub-committee shall be submitted through the appropriate convention sub-committee as an alternative proposal with the agreement and consent of the majority of the delegates.

9. When a motion is pending before the Convention, no motion shall be in order except to adjourn, to refer, for the previous question, to postpone indefinitely, to postpone for a certain time, to divide or amend, which motions shall have precedence in the order named.

10. No proxy votes will be recognized. In accordance with the National Convention Call, the total vote of a State delegation shall be equally divided among all attending delegates for the purpose of voting at general sessions, in those cases where financial limitations prevent full attendance. In all other cases, there shall be one vote for attending delegates or properly accredited alternates replacing delegates.

11. The convention will not recognize any unit rule and will function on the basis that all delegates in attendance, while reporting the thinking and decisions of their own state conventions, are expected to arrive at their independent conclusions on the basis both of the discussions in their parent organizations, as well as by the discussion at this convention.

12. The Convention shall elect a parliamentarian, four secretaries and four tellers to serve throughout the convention, and a chairman for each session.

13. At the time when the convention agenda is adopted provisions will be made for a number of special orders of business which shall take precedence at the specified time over any other business that may be before the house.

14. Supplementary rules will be introduced on the elections procedure when the convention comes to that order of business.

15. Roberts Rules of Order shall guide procedure on all points not covered by the rules that have been adopted.

*Ch.:* Comrades, when you want the floor, ask for it, because two or three people can start talking at the same time. I recognize the delegate at this end.

*Bob (California):* I'd like to propose that the rules be taken up seriatim, to avoid a great number of amendments.

*Ch.:* Comrades, this convention can do whatever you wish but I would like to caution the convention not to get hung up on a thousand and one little details but that we get down to the most pressing things that we've all come here to do. We may find that we'll be unable to conclude the business of this convention. Now it's up to you to decide, but I want to urge restraint on some of these problems that are not necessarily principled questions.

*Archie (California):* I want a couple of points of information. First of all

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

21

can the reporter for the presiding committee give us information on minority reports? What's the score on that?

*Winter:* The way in which the agenda is outlined, reports will come before this body on behalf of the various sub-committees and committees that were listed. Those committees will decide on the report to be presented to the convention. In the event that they should find it impossible to agree upon a report by majority vote, they have it in their power to decide on a minority report as well as a majority report and to designate the reports. But it is in the hands of the various committees to decide what type of report will be submitted to the full session.

*Ch.:* Is there a second to the motion? On the amendment. It's been moved and seconded. We'll act on the amendment first. State your motion, Archie, and hereafter, will the delegates state their names and the state they are from.

*Archie:* I'd like to amend the rules as follows: The amendment is that the minority report shall follow the majority report from each subcommittee when such notice has been given in the committee that a minority report is going to be made.

*Ch.:* Is the amendment clear to everybody now? [Vote taken.] The amendment is carried.

*Archie:* Comrade Chairman, I have another amendment if I'm in order, on the question of the Rules. My other amendment has to do with Rule 8, regarding any proposal that conflicts with the intent of the main motion, according to this rule has to be referred back

to the appropriate sub-committee. I would like to amend the rules, comrade chairman, to the effect that substitutes for the whole on any particular resolution shall be entertained if and when the main motion is voted down.

*Ch.:* Is there a second to the amendment? Seconded. Does the co-chairman want to comment?

*Bernie (New York):* Mr. Chairman, on the amendment. I would like to speak against it.

*Ch.:* Comrades, the chair at this time would like some advice from the convention. If on these procedural questions we have endless debate, we will not get down to business. I would like to entertain a motion that on these questions we allow a maximum of 3 minutes and 2 for and 2 against. The motion is made and seconded. [Vote taken.] So ordered. The comrade has the floor.

*Bernie:* I'm very much concerned by that change of rules which permits the introduction of a complete substitute, that it has a tendency to negate the work of the subcommittees which have gone on for a matter of days and hours in bringing their resolutions to the floor and represent the combined thinking of everybody participating in these committees. Therefore, I think that we ought to go along with the rules suggested by the Temporary Rules Committee and that is that nothing can be introduced as an amendment which contradicts the main intent of the original motion.

*Al (New York):* For the amendment. I had intended to make the same amendment. I haven't been in any

committee meetings so I believe I should have the right to participate in whatever the committee decides. It's my opinion that when there is a resolution on the floor and there's a discussion and a number of amendments made, a substitute for the whole cannot be referred to any committee but must be acted upon by the entire convention. I have never heard of such a procedure where a substitute is sent to committee and I am fully in favor of the amendment because I think that anything else would violate the democratic right of this convention to act on such a motion.

*Ch.:* Is there another speaker against?

*Sid (Upstate New York):* I would like to make the point that if a committee after long discussion in subcommittee as a delegated committee of this body cannot reach agreement on a formulation, it seems a little bit difficult that one person acting alone shall draw up a resolution on the floor before this body without discussion and have that as the intent of this whole convention. If a committee of delegates can't do it, I am quite sure no single individual will be able to do it.

*Archie:* Comrades, I think we can combine the speeding through of this convention with the democratic expression of the will of this body and when the committees come in and the report finds favor with the majority of the delegates, why that's it. It's only if it does not find favor with the delegates, only then can a person introduce a resolution and then as far as time is concerned, once such a resolution is introduced, why this body can limit

the debate. That wouldn't take too long and you can vote it up or down with dispatch. And this is the democratic way to do it and fulfill everything that we are trying to accomplish at this convention.

*Ch.:* The chair recognizes the co-chairman of the Rules Committee.

*Winter:* May I say on behalf of the Rules Committee, that the purpose of this provision in Rule 8 is related to any proposal that conflicts with the *intent* of the main motion. This is normal, parliamentary procedure so that the device of substitutes may not replace the right of the convention to vote a proposition down. If the convention wishes to act contrary to a motion before it, it votes No. It doesn't come up with a new proposition and start the discussion or the voting all over again. However, we do not want to prevent consideration of such negating propositions. Rather we prefer that they be sent back to the committee to consider if there is some sentiment for that. The committee regards this as the most democratic and the most expeditious procedure.

*Ch.:* You've heard the pros and cons on the amendment. Are you prepared to vote? All those in favor of the amendment as read by Delegate Archie: "After the main motion has been voted down by the majority of the Convention, then a substitute for the whole shall be entertained"—Is that clear to everybody? [Vote taken.] The amendment is carried.

*Winter:* I now move on behalf of the Temporary Rules Committee the adoption of the proposed agenda.



SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

PROPOSED CONVENTION AGENDA

*Saturday*

10 a.m. Welcoming remarks by Chairman of New York District  
 Convention opening remarks by National Chairman  
 Report of Temporary Rules Committee  
 Adoption of Rules  
 Adoption of Agenda  
 Memorial Observance  
 Greetings

*Lunch Recess 1:30*

(Delegation meetings to elect Committee members)

2:30 Additional fraternal greetings  
 2:45 Keynote Address—Eugene Dennis  
 Additional Fraternal Greetings  
 3:30 National Chairman's Address  
 4:00 Recess until Sunday 10 A.M.

*Sunday*

10 a.m. Additional Fraternal Greetings  
 10:30 Report of Constitution Sub-Committee #1—Name and Form; Discussion  
 11:30 Remarks from Resolutions Committee Chairman  
 Report from Resolutions Subcommittee #1—International, National, Anti-Monopoly Coalition; Discussion

*Lunch Recess 1:30*

2:30 Report from Resolutions Subcommittee #2—Negro Rights, Negro-white unity; Discussion  
 4:30 Report from Resolutions Subcommittee #3—Communists and the Labor Movement; Discussion

*Recess for Supper 6:30*

7:30 Report from Resolutions Subcommittee #4—American Road to Socialism; Discussion  
 8:30 Report from Resolution Subcommittee #5—The Party; Discussion (to be continued Monday Morning)

*Recess to Monday Morning 10:00*

*Monday*

10 a.m. Continue discussion on Resolutions Subcommittee #5—Report on Party

11:00 Remarks on behalf of Constitution and Organization Committee  
 11:30 Report from Constitution Subcommittee #2—Vanguard Role and Democratic Centralism; Discussion  
 12:30 Report from Constitution Subcommittee #3—Preamble and Purpose; Discussion (to continue in afternoon session)

*Recess for Lunch 1:30*

2:30 Continue discussion on Constitution Subcommittee #3—Preamble & Purpose  
 3:30 Report from Constitution Subcommittee #4—Rights, Duties and Structure; Discussion  
 5:30 Report of Credentials Committee  
 6:00 Report of Appeals Committee

*Recess for Supper 6:30*

8:00 Report of Civil Liberties Committee and Discussion  
 9:00 SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS  
 Report of Elections Committee and Discussion  
 10:00 District Delegation meetings

*Tuesday*

10:00 Report from Save Our Press Committee; Discussion  
 11:00 Audit Report  
 11:15 SPECIAL ORDER—Elections for National Committee  
 12:15 Report from Resolutions Subcommittee #6—Misc. Resolutions; Discussion

*Recess for Lunch 1:30*

2:30 SPECIAL ORDER—Report of Plan of Work; Discussion  
 3:30 SPECIAL ORDER—Report on Election Results  
 4:30 Complete unfinished business  
 6:00 ADJOURN

*Ben Davis:* Comrades, I am proposing a change in the agenda which will cover this afternoon's session. It is proposed on the agenda that we would have the speeches of Comrade Dennis and Comrade Foster and then the delegations would adjourn to committees.

Now I want to make an amendment to it. I propose that after the speeches of Comrade Foster and Comrade Dennis, this body shall have an opportunity for a plenary or a general discussion on the question of the Draft Resolution as a whole and on the question of the reports of Comrade Foster and Comrade Dennis.

I would say in support of this that it is only fair that I should tell the comrades that this was considered by the outgoing National Committee and this proposition was lost. But I felt it sufficiently serious to bring it before this body. And my reason for doing so is that I consider after two important reports by Comrade Dennis and Comrade Foster, there should be opportunity to discuss them on the part of the delegates, maybe 10 or 12 delegates or so.

Secondly, that the delegates should have an opportunity to discuss the Resolution as a whole. Now when you get this Resolution to discuss, it's going to come out in piecemeal fashion. That is, various subcommittees will report on various sections of the Resolution. Now I think that the delegates in addition to this should have the opportunity to discuss the Resolution as a whole, to express themselves on it, and in that way this will not at all detract from the business of this convention but this will give the delegates further expressions from other delegates on how they shall add and implement this discussion in the various committees. Now I consider that extremely important and I would like to hear the opinion of the delegates on this question and I think

it should be considered in that light.

*Ch.:* The amendment has been seconded. In accordance with the rule that you have made, two for and two against.

*Sid Stein:* Comrades, this proposition was considered in the National Committee, as Comrade Davis told you. It was also considered in the Resolutions Committee with the participation of some 15 comrades from various districts. The problem that it poses was faced up to on the basis of the experience of the various state conventions. And I want to give you some of the thinking that went into this proposal, both in the N. C. and in the Resolutions Committee.

We felt that we have had in the Party many months of discussion on the Resolution. We have received hundreds of resolutions from the state organizations, county organizations and Party clubs, which express the views of a cross section of the Party on the resolution. We have honored these and we have divided them according to subject amongst the subcommittees and they will be given due consideration. The convention as a whole and every delegate here under the agenda proposed will have the opportunity to discuss both the specific questions under each section as well as the general resolution. At the end of our discussion on the specifics, we will then have an opportunity to speak and to vote on the general.

The reason for it is, comrades, that we have found in many state conventions amendments to the resolution, changes in the resolution, helped the

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

25

comrades to unite and act upon the resolution based upon the changes made. Therefore to discuss it first in general and amend it later does not provide a discussion that leads to decision on the specific.

Further, the reports that are going to be made here are not really reports. They are not to be voted upon by this convention. This convention will vote upon the resolution, not the reports. We feel this will provide the widest range of democratic discussion, and the best opportunity to come to united decisions on the question before the convention. (Applause.)

*Paul (New York)*: I rise to speak in favor of the amendment offered by comrade Davis because I feel very strongly that the rank and file of the Party throughout the country should have the opportunity in plenary session to discuss their views and experiences thru their state conventions, discuss specific examples and specific experiences relating to the general approach of the draft resolution as a whole, to be able to discuss major questions involving the vital content of the line of our Party and the structure of our Party against the background of the two reports that are going to be given by Comrade Dennis and Comrade Foster. I think that such a general discussion would help to clarify the comrades from all different parts of the country as to the experiences and feelings of the delegates of the various states, give them a picture of the approaches of the various state conventions and would serve as an overall aid to the committee discussions.

I think it would help to expedite the work of the committees, not in the sense of coming to a conclusion concerning the draft resolution considering specifics, but to serve as a general background for the work and discussions of the various committees. I think that it would provide at the outset of the convention the expression of the rank and file comrades on the reports on the Draft Resolution as a whole. I think it would be a good and proper way to start off the convention by allowing a maximum of rank and file expression on the basic issues as a whole.

*Ch.*: Comrade Paul referred to the addresses as reports. I would like to clarify. They are not reports. They are addresses. One is a keynote by Comrade Dennis and the other is remarks by Comrade Foster, who is National Chairman of our Party. Just want you to get this point clear.

*Bill Lawrence (New York)*: With all due respect to Comrade Davis, I rise to speak against the amendment for the following reasons: First of all, the proposed convention agenda proposes reports from the respective subcommittees which embrace all of the fundamental questions that we might differ on or are anxious to exchange opinions on. Hence, I believe that this convention as a general assembly will not only have an opportunity to discuss, vote and act on the respective fundamental questions, but will be able to act and discuss based on thorough discussion in the respective sub-committees. Second, I believe inasmuch as the keynote address and the remarks by Comrade Foster are of a general character and

not reports in the sense that we understand, and because we will have the opportunity to discuss the various questions from the respective sub-committees, I am opposed to the amendment.

Finally, I believe that the proposal as submitted by the Rules Committee will provide greater democratic discussion, a more unified convention and an opportunity for all the delegates, particularly thru the medium of the sub-committees as well as the general assembly to take part in the various questions as reported by the subcommittees.

*Ch.:* The chair proceeding under the ruling of 2 for and 2 against, unless it is otherwise the desire of this convention, will proceed to take the vote.

*Milford (Washington):* Point of Information. Comrade Stein in explaining his position on this question indicates that after the various sections of the resolution have been discussed, that there will be opportunity in the convention to discuss the resolution as a whole. Yet in going over the agenda, I find no such place on the agenda, and I would like to know what the thinking is in connection with where this is to be discussed on this agenda. It would affect the question of how I would vote if I knew where this was to be discussed.

*Ch.:* Comrade Stein or Comrade Winter, do you wish to clarify this point?

*Winter:* Following action by the convention on the reports from the various subcommittees on the Resolution or on the Constitution, it will be the property of this convention. The convention

having heard and acted upon the reports from the various sub-committees will then have a total picture before it of what the Constitution looks like, what the Resolution looks like and will then be able to make whatever motions it cares to make as to its disposition of the document as a whole. Discussion will proceed at the time that any such motions are made. There is only a leeway of one and a half hours in the present agenda as proposed for such general discussion not otherwise provided for.

*Al (New York):* I heard from the chair that on the various reports of subcommittees, there will be no action, just discussion. No provision for action.

*Ch.:* No one said that. There will be action on the subcommittee reports.

*Al:* Well, I propose that that be included on the agenda.

*Ch.:* It's in the report, Comrade Al. You misunderstood the report then.

*Ch.:* The previous question has been moved and seconded. We are acting on the previous question—that is to close the debate on the amendment that was proposed. The motion is carried. Now the vote is on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment—that there be general omnibus discussion following the two speeches by Comrades Dennis and Foster. That's the amendment. Now all those in favor of this amendment: 87—opposed; 62—for. The amendment is lost.

*Tom Dennis (Michigan):* I have just one proposed change in the agenda and that is that the report of the Credentials Committee be moved up to Sunday morning because no delegates are actually officially seated until that report comes in.

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

27

It doesn't come in till late Monday afternoon and we will have acted on a whole series of resolutions, changes, etc., and I know there may be some people who may have to leave before that and will leave without ever having been seated officially as delegates. So I propose that it be moved up to Sunday morning so that that can be done.

*Ch.*: Does the Rules Committee want to accept the amendment? Yes. [Vote taken—carried.]

*Mollie West (Illinois)*: Comrades, I'd like to propose a certain change in the order of business to move up the special order of business of the report of the Elections Committee and discussion to early Monday afternoon because a number of delegations have certain comrades who must be back and who certainly cannot stay any later than Monday night. This being such an important order of business I feel it should be so moved up.

*Ch.*: Would the co-chairman of the Rules Committee like to accept that amendment? Unless there is any strong opposition to it, I'll put it to a vote. The motion is we move up the elections to Monday afternoon some time in order to enable delegates who may have to leave for work or other considerations to be able to participate.

*Bill S. (New York)*: Comrades, I can understand the feeling of the comrades. But we are going to elect pilots to navigate a ship on a course that has been laid out over some period of time on Marxism and Leninism, and we're going to have a crew. Now I think it's absolutely necessary that the comrades have an opportunity to know the qualifications, the leanings and the capabilities of that crew's leaders before they have an opportunity to vote for it. So it's necessary for some of these committees to report back and have a discussion that these comrades will know how to really vote, and therefore I'm against moving it up unless some provisions could be made for full discussion on the draft resolution and the people we are going to vote on.

*Ch.*: The chair would like to have a motion to clarify the intent.

*Mollie West*: Comrades, my motion was to move up the special order of business—report of Elections Committee and Discussion to be followed by the district delegations meetings earlier Monday in order to

give every delegate an opportunity to at least discuss it if they can't stay for the actual voting. Now if it's possible to have the whole elections business taken care of Monday, alright, but at least that much in my opinion has to be moved up.

*Fred Fine*: I think that there is nothing wrong with the motion except for one thing, which I hope all the delegates understand. The report of the Elections Committee can only properly take place and be acted upon by the Convention after the Constitution is adopted. In other words you could push it up at best about an hour and a half or so, maybe two hours but you would have to first act on the Constitution.

*Ch.*: I propose that you make a motion to accept the limitation and move it up in accordance with that.

*Hank (New York)*: I'd like to speak against the proposed amendment. I am not denying the validity behind it. A canvass of the Industrial Division delegates, at least a partial canvass, indicates a substantial number of delegates cannot be here Monday during the daytime due to problems of employment. Many of them have tried to get off and cannot. It's not a financial question. It's a question of job security. Therefore I would like to urge the delegates to vote against moving up this special Order of business because Monday night the chances are we will have maximum attendance and therefore maximum participation. At best perhaps it could be moved up to 8 o'clock and the Civil Liberties Committee could come afterwards. But if you move it up during the daytime, a substantial number of delegates, and not of their own choosing, will not be present and won't be able to participate.

*Ch.*: Two spoke against the amendment and now one for. The chair will recognize another one for.

*George Watt*: As I understand the amendment, the amendment deals not with the election of a national committee: it deals with a report from the Elections and Leadership committee. I think that the timing of this as it now stands would provide for the district delegation caucuses to go into session at 10 o'clock at night. Now I think that would keep the delegations here into the small hours of the morning because there'll be probably complex and very knotty problems. Therefore

I would be for the amendment as made by Mollie here to try to have an elections report given before the supper recess on that day.

*Ch.*: We will now put it to a vote. There have been 2 for and 2 against. [Vote taken.] The amendment carries.

*Hank (New Jersey)*: I should like to amend the agenda to move the report of the Appeals Committee from 6 o'clock Monday to precede the report of the Resolutions Committee on 7:30 Sunday. I make this motion because I feel that a situation has developed in the State of New Jersey that is of basic concern to every delegate here. Therefore I think it is of basic importance that every delegate become acquainted with some of the problems confronting our Party and I think it is of such magnitude that every delegate here should know about it and express an opinion on it. Therefore, I would amend the agenda so that the report of the Appeals Committee be moved up from 6 o'clock Monday to some time Sunday, before the report of the Resolutions Committee.

*Ch.*: Is that clear now? Is there anybody for or against the amendment?

*Lou (New Jersey)*: Comrade chairman, I have no principled objection other than the fact that arrangements have been made tomorrow afternoon to hear the case the comrade refers to and I doubt very much because of the complicated character of the case that the committee will be prepared to make a report at that time. Other than that, I would be in favor of it. It's a practical matter.

*Ch.*: Further discussion on the amendment? Hearing none, the chair calls for a vote on the motion. The motion is lost.

*Winter*: I should like to inform the delegates, as they may very well be aware themselves that this convention has been the center of attention on the part of many groups and organizations in the country who have politically opposed our program and activities. But amongst them there are many organizations and indivi-

duals who are concerned about the protection and preservation of the constitutional liberties of political organizations in our country including those of the Communists. Amongst such groups and individuals there have been expressed an interest, subject to our agreement, in taking some action that would help us demonstrate to the country at large that our Party is a political party concerned with the business which it declares to be its object in its Resolutions and Constitution and public pronouncements, that it functions in no wise as a conspiracy, as has been charged against it and also to make it possible in the event of future difficulties following this convention to refer to the evidence that may rest in the observance of this convention by prominent civic persons representing organizations known to have been in disagreement with the program and purposes of our organization.

We have had inquiry and various signs of interest and desire to cooperate to these ends from a number of groups, Catholic organizations, various civil liberties groups, and others. The National Committee discussed this question and came to the conclusion that it would be to the distinct benefit, not only of our Party, its delegates to this convention and its membership, but of particular benefit to the struggle which our Party has consistently

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

29

waged for defense of constitutional liberties in our country, for the preservation and strengthening of the legal status of our Party, to invite as observers to this convention a number of such prominent individuals.

We have therefore, in the name of the National Committee, informed a dozen or so that we would present this question to the convention for its action. I should like to read the list of those who have declared themselves available as observers to serve the purposes I have indicated. They are:

Former President of St. John's College, lecturer, Professor Stringfellow Barr;

The Editor of *The Catholic Worker*, Dorothy Day;

The Executive Secretary Emeritus of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, A. J. Muste;

Faculty Member of St. Lawrence College, Dr. Roy Finch;

The former Chairman of the New York Civil Liberties Union, Rev. John Paul Jones;

The Executive Secretary of the War Resisters League and a co-organizer of the Montgomery Anniversary Concert, Bayard Rustin;

The Director of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, also former Secretary of

Peace Education and American Friends Service Committee of Iowa, George Willoughby;

The Director of Peace Education of the Atlantic Region of the American Friends Service Committee, Lyle Tatum;

The Director of Publications for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Alfred Hassler;

Lecturer at the New School for Social Research, Bernard Rosenberg;

Board Member of the New York Civil Liberties Union, Carl Rachlin;

Board Member of the New York Civil Liberties Union and professor of psychology at New York University, Dr. Marie Jahoda; and

An attorney for the New York Civil Liberties Union, Lester Migdall.

We indicated in advance that this matter would be discussed upon opening our convention, that final determination rests with the will of the delegates and have suggested to those who would be willing to attend as observers under the conditions I have described, that they be available at about noon today. Perhaps we somewhat overestimated the possibility of our getting through with some of the organization business. However, at this time, on be-

half of the Temporary Rules Committee, acting in accordance with the decision of the outgoing National Committee, I would move that we open the Observers' section of this convention to the list I have named. (Applause.)

*James Ford (New York):* Comrade chairman: Point of information. I'd like to know if any representatives of labor and of the Negro people have been informed of this invitation.

*Winter:* As for representatives of labor organizations, the National Committee has canvassed energetically for persons whose names would occupy the necessary weight to enable us to make reference in the future to their participation as observers, representatives of sections of the labor movement not associated with our organization. We have not been able to obtain any acceptance from such persons. We have done the same with respect to a number of persons prominent in Negro life. However, we do have as one acceptance Bayard Rustin, the Executive Secretary of the War Resisters League who is the co-organizer of the Montgomery Anniversary Concert, a prominent Negro leader.

Comrade Blumberg will be able to inform us of preliminary efforts that were made. Meanwhile may I say that the committee would welcome further proposals, whether they happen to cover names already canvassed, or if they give us additional names, the committee will certainly extend addi-

tional invitations to this convention.

*Albert Blumberg:* I would just supplement this by saying that a number of people indicated interest but they would be out of town. What the chairman has read to you are those who indicated that they could and would be present. Among those who indicated interest but unavailability are: Norman Thomas, Roger Baldwin, the Rev. James Robinson from Harlem and a number of others. So that in the course of the canvass efforts were made by those who initiated this thought, to wit, Mr. Muste and Mr. Thomas, they have been in touch with a number of interested people. On the specific question of A. Philip Randolph, he is out of town, as the press indicates, speaking in the South.

[Additional discussion on suggestions of persons to be invited.]

*Helen Winter (Michigan):* I would like to rise in support of the recommendation of the Rules Committee, considering it a very important step in the direction of legalizing the various elements and procedures of our Party as a fight for the full legalization of our Party as a political party in the United States. I think that otherwise it will be very much to the good of our Party if the various debates on the matter of our Constitution and the Resolutions before it, are left open for the hearing of such individuals named by the Presiding Committee.

*Al (New York):* Speaking against the proposal. First, I want to object to the method in which the National Committee went about this so as to put us in a position of chasing people



SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

31

away from the door who have already agreed to come. That's a squeeze play in my opinion. Secondly, I'm against it because the most important problem here is our hammering out a program and form of organization of our Party, no matter what anybody else thinks about it. The main thing is that we do what we think is right and our job, no matter what anybody thinks about it, and what we do will be made available to the world when we're through. I fear that having outsiders will inhibit the discussion. I heard from New Jersey already that some delegates decided not to come, I don't know whether for this reason or what. But I know there are people who are coming here risking many things and will feel inhibited as to how they speak, how frankly they speak, feeling, well, there's a spotlight on them. And I think the whole thing is wrong! I think the Communist Party ought to have a convention, decide what it wants to do, and then tell the world what it did. (Applause.)

*Fred Blair (Wisconsin)*: I am very much in favor of this motion. I have been in the Party pretty near 27½ years, and I've never seen an inhibited Communist yet. (Laughter, applause.) It's a sort of contradiction in terms.

As a matter of fact the complaint usually is that we aren't inhibited enough. The usual complaint about me is that particularly when it comes to talking, I don't know when to stop.

*Ch.*: You can stop in 3 or 4 minutes (laughter).

*Blair*: I am well enough acquainted with Comrade Lightfoot to know that

that will be true. I was wondering if it isn't possible to continue the canvassing to see if we can have some more people besides these, along the lines of what Comrade Ford was suggesting. Like the *American Socialist*, who have been busying themselves wondering and worrying about what's going to happen to us because they're wondering what's going to happen to them and think what we decide determines what happens to them but nevertheless who have some connection. Or do we want to leave this open so there's a possibility for further exploration of inviting people, presenting names to this convention. And I think we have people who couldn't come here because of security, not because of inhibition, and I think that everybody who is here, we can talk what we have to say in front of the whole bloody world and we don't have to be so timid. (Applause.)

*Ford*: Comrade chairman, I want to speak against the proposal. First of all I think it is obvious that our convention meeting here today is concerned with the whole field of struggle for civil liberties, for the rights of the Negro people, for broadening our contacts with masses of people outside our ranks, and throughout the country. It is also obvious that many of the people that I've heard here have boldly defended the Communists in their rights, have defended Smith Act victims and have been friendly to the Negro people. I think, however, that our convention here is an unprecedented convention, convened for the purpose of discussing fundamental

problems of our organization and the maintaining of our organization on the basis of a Marxist-Leninist line. And I think it is necessary for us to solve that question among ourselves and by ourselves. I am aware that hundreds, and Comrade Foster has indicated, even people opposed to us, are concerned about our convention and they want to know about it. And I think therefore, whereas the intent may be good, and has that broad approach, I think it is not necessary and not advisable. And therefore I am opposed to it. And further, there would be only one alternative to that proposal: that if there had been in my opinion a sincere effort to get representatives of the Negro people who today represent the real civil rights struggle in our country, I am sure, comrades, we could have gotten them. I don't think that there has been a sincere effort even in the consultation of our Negro comrades as to the security of representatives and therefore I am opposed to it and I think that there is a sort of a second-class treatment of representatives to be invited to this convention.

*Ch.:* Comrades we have had two for and two against. The question has been called.

*Geo. Samson (New Jersey):* Point of order. I think that due to the importance of this question and I might say there is extremely sharp division on this question, that there should be an extended period of discussion.

*Ch.:* Comrade, this is no point of order.

*Samson:* All I can say is, comrades, if this motion is carried I know that I and a number of other delegates will just have

to leave this convention. And I think it's important enough to hear why.

*Ch.:* Comrades, if you want to extend debate, the chair has no vested interest one way or the other. It's up to the will of this convention if it wishes to extend debate on this question, to move a motion and carry it to that effect and then we'll do so. But I cannot act against the will of the body unless it's changed. So—

*Winter:* I ask for the privilege to intervene at this point in an effort to appeal to this convention and every single delegate within it to respect the will of every other delegate and the collective wisdom of this body, whether it coincides with his personal opinions or not. I think we should reject from the outset of this convention any proposition that anyone might be tempted to present that counterposes his intention of walking out of this session to any possible decision of this body (applause).

*Samson:* I'd like to hear why because that was not the intent of what I said, comrades. You are giving an intent to what I said which is not there. It is a question of security involved and not a question of opposing any decision of this convention. I object very much to the thinking you gave.

*Ch.:* Comrades, I would like to request the comrade who is speaking to hold his point for a few minutes and let's take a vote as to whether or not we extend the discussion. It is clear there are strong feelings on this particular subject. The chair would like to entertain a motion to that effect. [Motion made and seconded.] I would also like to be guided by two for and two against, so that we will not have interminable debate. [Vote taken.] So ordered. The chair recognizes the comrade who had the floor, speaking against.

*Samson:* Comrades, we have for a long time been debating and discussing our problems, as members of the Communist Party. This National Convention is the climax to this debate at which very important decisions for our activities, for attempting to resolve our problems, to end our isolation, are to take place. Because of the nature of

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

33

the present situation within our country, there are many comrades who should be here and are unable to be here. On the other hand because of the nature of the discussion, some comrades engaged in important mass work, industrial activity, have made an effort to come here under certain particular circumstances. This is a convention of the Communist Party. These people involved in mass activity, in trade union activity and who are working in the shops have come here to participate in this debate, express their viewpoints.

The point that I made before was—not that I had any intention of walking out—if you pass a motion against my position—but in relation to our mass activity, in relation to our work, I feel that this proposal would endanger us to the point that at this particular point if I had known ahead of time, I would not have come. We are elected delegates to this convention, we have a right to participate in this convention, and these people, while I consider the importance of their being here, if the circumstances were different I would be wholeheartedly in favor of it, and I say the regularly elected delegates to this convention who happen to be in a similar situation as myself have the full right to be here without in any manner, shape or form, being in a situation where they feel their security is endangered so that they will be unable to attend and participate in the deliberations of this convention.

*Charles Loman (New York)*: Point of information. I want to ask a question along the lines Helen Winter placed it. There will be matters which

we may not want to take up in general session. Now you've explained that. But there is another factor here involved. I received a number of telephone calls from comrades this morning asking me in light of yesterday's story should they come to the convention. I told them by all means come and it would be raised. Now I think before we vote on this, we should not think in the spirit of those of us who are publicly known functionaries, we all realize the importance of utilizing every means to fight for legality, but in the interest of those people who we fought to convince and to come, it maybe a job or a contact, etc. I would like to know from the floor of this convention how many people here feel inhibited or feel they might be exposed as delegates.

*Ch.*: I rule this question out of order because a vote on the question will determine that.

*Bob (California)*: I am speaking for. Friends, first of all I want to say that we had a great struggle to convince certain people to come to this convention. But we have to remember that the question of risk is not a question of whether the Federal Bureau of Investigation knows that you're here or not. Anyone who humors himself to think that they don't know that (applause) simply because some guest or other is not in the house is really putting himself in a position where he just doesn't know what's going on in this country. That's No. 1. So what is the question of security involved here? The question of security is not whether a certain member of our or-

ganization who works in a particular shop or mass organization is known to the F.B.I. Therefore, we have to say that those people who recognize these problems and in the face of these problems have made the great sacrifice of coming here to this convention, as some of us have—comrades, I almost was divorced for coming to this convention, and I have four children (laughter)—those who have made this sacrifice to come to this convention made this sacrifice in order to get somewhere. We didn't make this sacrifice in order to make some private party and then go home. We made this sacrifice so that when this convention is over, more people in these United States will say, "Well, regardless of whether we agree with what these people say, at least they're honest and trying to get somewhere." (Applause.) And I'll tell you this. Some people have come up to me and said, "Why don't you point out these people are being friendly." I don't care if they're not friendly. I don't care if they're enemies. There's no reason in my mind why any single person barring the question of space should not be allowed to sit in this convention. Thank you.

*John (New Jersey):* Brother Chairman, brothers and sisters. I want to speak against the motion. And I want to say that I look forward to the time when our Party will hold its conventions openly with no question of fear of prosecution, with no question but that we want the American people, as we do now, to know not only through our own lips, but through the lips of observers both biased against

us as well as unbiased where we stand. I think first we have to find out how we stand. I respect very much my good brother from Wisconsin who says in his 24 years in the Party he has never seen an inhibited Communist. I've been in the Party 24 years and I know that we would not be having the kind of convention we are having today if we had not had the kind of bureaucratic system which made for very few *but* inhibited Communists.

I know that there are members of the New Jersey delegation who upon hearing that observers have been invited, are absent from this convention. I think this is to be regretted. I am not one to condemn them. I know there is some dirty linen that must be washed at this Convention. I think we must come out of here clean and I for one will be inhibited, although I am not normally an inhibited guy, from saying the things that I feel must be said before people who are good people but are not members of this convention.

*Ch.:* The chair now recognizes Comrade Ben Davis for a point of clarification.

*Ben Davis:* Comrades, I am going to speak for the motion, and not so much clarification. I want to express my agreement with this proposal in principle and to say the following: It is my feeling here, comrades, that our Party is attempting to do something new, and is trying to make a turn in answering many of the slanders against our Party as a conspiracy, as secrecy and to establish good public relations. Now this is important. It is important that we

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

make this turn. It is important also that we try to do it in as perfected a manner as possible. Now I think since this is something we have never tried before, it's natural that we are somewhat new at it and that we haven't perfected it. For example, I don't think there were enough Negroes. I don't think there were enough workers. I don't think that there were enough rank and filers invited from various places and industries and mass organizations. Well, the fact that we didn't does not mean that our Party committee opposes it, but I think it grows out of the rush, the attempt of our Party to make this turn, to do this service, which I think is very important and not at all due to the fact that some comrades wanted to restrict the calibre, type or any other designation. I think that this is a weakness of the proposal that has been made, but I do think that in principle there's nothing wrong with it. It's sound.

Now I too had some reservations about it and I share very much the reservations of those comrades who spoke about security. But as I understand it, this matter has been talked over with many of the district leaders, that this has been cut down to a minimum and we all know that they're all around here, the FBI and everything else, and that no matter what we do there's a certain amount of risk. We have to decide whether we have anything to gain from it. I think we do. (Applause.)

*Lil Gates (New York)*: Comrade chairman, point of clarification. Before we take a vote, I would like to ask the

committee that worked on this to answer this question of there being a policy of not asking Negroes or labor people which was implied in the remarks, which should be cleared up before we vote.

*Ch.*: There was no such policy. I consulted with Comrade Ben Davis on this and he informs me that there was not. [Vote taken.] It is obviously overwhelmingly carried. (Applause.) The observers will be brought in.\*

*Winter*: Now the Temporary Rules Committee wishes to propose the committees to be constituted by the Convention and propose the chairmen and secretaries of these committees. Again I want to call attention to the fact that the bulk of the work of this convention will be conducted in committee. A great deal of preparatory work has been done under the direction of the National Committee jointly with the various state committees in setting up temporary subcommittees for preparation of material for this convention.

In proposing the officers of convention committees we have taken into account the need for continuity of work already initiated by subcommittees working in preparation of the convention. We have taken into account the need to give maximum representation to all parts of the country, to the major districts, and

\* The statement issued by eight of the eleven observers following the Convention appears on page 349.

the areas of concentration in the activities of our Party. The leaders of the major delegations have been consulted in preparation of these proposals.

I would urge upon the comrades to bear in mind that this list is not easily transposed, although there will undoubtedly be a desire to change one or another name. But I would like to remind you that the committee has been constantly readjusting names on this list in consultation with various delegations. In composing the proposals the committee also took into account the character of the discussions at the various state conventions. So that we could wherever possible include the most important though differing viewpoints on various questions that were reflected in the respective state discussions.

#### The Rules Committee proposes:

For the Credentials Committee: Co-chairmen, Charles Nusser of New Jersey and Charlene Alexander of California. Secretaries: Junius Scales of North Carolina and Bolzer Baxter of Michigan.

For the Public Relations Committee (that committee has already been at work with the press): Chairman: Si Gerson of New York, also William Allan of Michigan, Abner Berry of New York and Al Richmond of California.

The Resolutions Committee: General Co-chairmen: Sid Stein of New Jersey and James Jackson representing the South; Secretary: Dorothy Healey of California.

Now there are six subcommittees of the Resolutions Committee, proposed. You have virtually adopted the idea of having six such subcommittees by adopting the agenda.

Subcommittee No. 1 on the International and National Situation and Anti-Monopoly Coalition—we propose as Co-Chairmen: Lil Gates of New York and Hy Lumer of Ohio; as secretaries, William Weinstone of New York and John of New Jersey.

Subcommittee No. 2 on Negro Rights and Negro-White Unity; Chairman: James Jackson, representing the South; Secretaries: Carl Winter of Michigan and Al Blumberg of New York.

Subcommittee No. 3—Trade Union Question: Co-chairmen: Paul Brooks of Michigan, and Morris of New York; Secretaries: Dave Davis of Eastern Penn., and Flo Hall of Illinois.

Subcommittee No. 4—The Road Ahead: Chairman: A. Krehmarek of Ohio; Secretary: Al Blumberg of New York.

Subcommittee No. 5—The Party: Chairman: William Schneiderman of California, and Nemmy Sparks representing Connecticut; Secretaries: Burt Nelson of Washington, and Mac Weiss representing Illinois.

Subcommittee No. 6—on Miscellaneous Resolutions: Co-chairmen; Hugh Stetton of Ohio and Geo. Meyers of Maryland; Secretary: Sam Kushner of Illinois.

Constitution Committee—General Co-Chairmen: Fred Fine of Illinois, and Tom Dennis of Michigan; Secretary: Louise Todd of California.

You have approved four subcommittees on the Constitution when you adopted the agenda.

For Subcommittee No. 1 on Name and Form—Co-chairmen: Oleta Yates of California and Mark of Michigan; (Comrade Mark is not in attendance. Perhaps Michigan can designate another, or the convention at large.) Secretaries: Charles Loman of New York, and Sam Coleman of New York.

Subcommittee No. 2—on Vanguard Role and Democratic Centralism: Chairman: Louise Todd of California; and Secretaries: Lou Malinow of N. J., and James Allen representing the South.

Subcommittee No. 3—on Preamble and Purpose: Chairman: Carl Ross of Minnesota; Secretaries: Archie of California, and Millie of New York.

Subcommittee No. 4—on Rights, Duties and Structure—Chairman: Tom Dennis of Michigan; Secretaries: Mollie West of

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

37

Illinois, and Joe Roberts of Eastern Pennsylvania.

Now the Committee for Elections and Leadership—Co-chairmen: Geo. Watt representing Western Pennsylvania, and Helen Winter of Michigan; Secretaries: Martha Stone of New Jersey, and Earl Durham of Illinois.

Save Our Press Committee—Co-chairmen: John Gates of New York, and Geraldine Lightfoot of Illinois; Secretaries: Saul Wellman of Michigan, and Jack Kling of Illinois.

Civil Liberties Committee—Co-chairmen: Si Gerson of New York, and Bill Patterson of New York; Secretaries: Bill Sennett of Illinois, and Tom Nabried of Eastern Pennsylvania.

Committee on Plan of Work—Co-chairmen: Steve Nelson of Western Pennsylvania, and Joe Kuzma of Eastern Pennsylvania; Secretaries: Betty representing Minnesota, and Jesus Colon of New York.

Appeals Committee—Co-chairmen: Morris Childs of Illinois, and Al Murphy of Missouri; Secretaries: William S. of New York, and Hesh Klein of New York.

Lastly we propose a Presiding and Rules Committee to consist of a representative from each delegation plus the National Secretariat consisting of Comrades Foster, Dennis, Davis, Gates, Weiss and Fine. So that it is proposed that the Presiding Committee to be elected which will consult on the proceedings of this convention, that will receive suggestions of the respective delegations and will report back to this body on any action to be taken that represents any change from the rules and agenda already adopted or any other matters that may come before it, and which should elect a small Steering Committee for the moment to moment direction of the work

shall consist of a representative from each delegation, Comrade Foster and the outgoing National Secretariat comprising the additional five comrades named and the Temporary Rules Committee which prepared the material on which you have acted and are now reaching final action on. The Temporary Rules Committee consists of co-chairmen Lightfoot and Winter, plus George Charney of New York, Sid Stein of New Jersey, Fred Fine of Illinois and Ben Davis of New York.

I move, comrades, the adoption of the committees, chairmen and secretaries as proposed.

*Ch.:* Is there a second to the motion? Discussion?

*Charles Loman (New York):* Could we have a five-minute recess? There are a couple of problems. Some have one chairman, some two chairmen, some have not enough Negro representation. I would like to propose that you give us 5 minutes to study these and then we'll vote.

*Ch.:* [In answer to question from the floor.] Each district delegation will select the person to serve on the presiding committee.

*Winter:* This question calls my attention to the fact that I neglected one feature of the composition of committees: Heads of delegations have received from the Temporary Rules Committee a proposed schedule of organization, which is based upon the number of voting delegates to which each

district is entitled. That schedule of organization allots to each district delegation a number of delegates to serve on as many of the convention committees and subcommittees as it is possible to do in accordance with the number of delegates. The personnel to be assigned to these committees is entirely at the discretion of the delegation. We had in mind that we could not satisfy all requirements in naming the officers for these committees but that there would be provision for strengthening the composition of the committees by action of the delegations themselves in assigning members of delegations to serve on various committees in accordance with the table of organization in the hands of each delegation leader. In addition to that the presiding committee will have a representative elected by each delegation, as a member of the Presiding Committee.

*Ch.:* The chair would like to urge upon the convention to accept this report, including the remarks.

[Vote taken.] I think it is overwhelmingly accepted.

*Winter:* I should like to move now, comrades, approval of the Temporary Rules Committee report as amended by the convention and dismissal of the Temporary Rules Committee.

[Motion seconded and carried.]

*Ch.:* The chair now recognizes Comrade Martha Stone from New Jersey.

*Martha Stone:* Comrades, we have

reached a solemn moment in our convention proceedings. Between the 15th convention held in December 1950 and the 16th convention of our Party, death has claimed a number of very beloved comrades. Some of the best sons and daughters of our country who gave the best years of their lives to the liberation of mankind are absent from our convention today. We honor these fallen comrades for their contribution to the democratic achievements of our great country. Among them are comrades who suffered privation, with repeated, sometimes long, prison sentences for fighting for the right to picket, to organize, in the struggle for Negro rights, against frameups of Tom Mooney and Sacco-Vanzetti. These comrades have lived through very hard times. They experienced poverty and war like millions of people in America who also lived through such hard times. But these comrades distinguished themselves among the people because they were able to come up with alternatives to the lawless and brutal attacks of capitalism, pointing the way to the socialist reorganization of our society where exploitation of man by man is completely eliminated. Their role as Communists, like that of the Party they represented, was always a constructive one throughout the years, as the American working class and the Negro people fought for higher living standards against all



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

39

sorts of fascist attacks and McCarthyism and for a policy of peaceful co-existence. We honor today such dear comrades as *Alfred Wagenknecht*, charter member of our Party, known for his nationwide campaign for strikers' relief in the period of the depression, in the Sacco-Vanzetti and Scottsboro cases, for years a resident of Chicago and a leader of the Communist Party there.

We honor a giant of a man not only for his physical stature, but his great contribution to our Party and our people. We honor *Robert Minor*, a native of Texas, an artist, a great champion in the cause of civil liberties.

We honor here today *Ray Hansborough*, a Negro leader of the Communist Party, who took leadership in Wisconsin, Illinois, New York, was a former member of the National Committee of the Party and in the period of time when he was very ill, shortly before his death, was the organizer of the Communist Party on the South Side of Chicago.

We honor that man whose name is a beloved one to the rank and file of our Party; a leader of our Party, the former New York State Chairman of the Party, *Israel Amter*, whose years in the unemployed struggles, and whose close and intimate ties with the membership of our Party endeared him in the hearts of all of the members in New York

and in many other districts of our country.

We honor a woman whom many of us had unfortunately no opportunity to honor at the time of her funeral—*Mother Ella Reeve Bloor*—who until the very last days of her life had the closest ties with the socialist-minded people from one end of the country to the other, regardless of their political differences with the Communist Party. Ella Reeve Bloor, prominent woman leader, maintained this close association and today when we emphasize this aspect of our work, in this regard as well as in many other respects, she stands out as a proud example of a Communist who always worked as a mass leader.

Another illustration is our own proud figure, *Anita Whitney*, who was a charter member of our Party, the honorary chairman of the California District, who is known in this country as her name is linked with the Suffragette movement, and who was a former member of the National Committee of our Party.

*Frank Mucci* who in Chicago and in other parts of the country carried with his name the symbol of a working class fighter, a man who came from a working class family, himself a coal miner, and one who was promoted to a position of officer-ship during the battles of the Second World War.

We honor William Weiner, a modest man, whose name is held dear by thousands of people in the national groups field from one end of the country to the other, as he was related with the International Workers Order and the problems of the people in these great movements.

We honor here today a man who acquired the culture and tools of a brain worker by his arduous toil up from poverty like that of the poor white people in the South—*Sam Hall*—who was a district organizer of North Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas, a man who knew how to write and talk in the language of the people, and whose wife today carries on bravely his activity in behalf of the Communist Party today in the South.

I ask you, comrades, to rise for a moment of silence in honor of these as well as of our rank and file members and other beloved figures in our State organizations — all valiant Americans who have passed away since our last convention.

*Ch.:* I recognize at this time Comrade Winter on a special order.

*Winter:* Comrades, I rise to offer a motion which I think the delegates will agree should constitute the first business-like work of this convention. I propose that this convention address a telegram to President Dwight D. Eisenhower at Thomasville, Ga., reading as follows:

President Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Thomasville, Ga.

The bombs are falling in Alabama, not in the Middle East. The threat to American democracy is not 5,000 miles away. It is here at home. Your rejection of a request of outstanding Southern Negro leaders that you speak in the South against the immorality of racist violence has shocked millions of Americans, Negro and white.

At your press conference last Wednesday you defended your refusal on the grounds that you were too busy.

What business could be more important than enforcing the Constitution of the United States now under attack by a small minority of southern white hoodlums backed by state and local officials? You are now in Georgia, one hour's flight from the bombings. The President of the United States should find the time to defend the Constitution and the rights of all Americans.

We, over 350 delegates to the 16th national convention of the Communist Party, believe we express the wishes of the majority of the American people in urging you to issue in the South a new Eisenhower doctrine for enforcement of the Supreme Court's desegregation decisions and against the racist advocates and practitioners of force and violence.

I move the adoption of this telegram (applause).

[Vote taken—so ordered.]

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

41

### AFTERNOON SESSION

February 9, 1957

*Ch.*: Fraternal greetings have been received from the Communist Parties of many countries including: France, Italy, Japan, Bolivia, Colombia, Great Britain, Australia, Puerto Rico, the Netherlands, Canada, Bulgaria, Belgium, Trieste, Korea, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, Uruguay, Chile and Romania—and I understand there are more coming in.\*

[Greetings read from Canada, Puerto Rico, Czechoslovakia and Italy.]

Hearty fraternal greetings to your national convention. We wish you success in strengthening and consolidating the Party in common resolve to contribute your invaluable aid to win peace, progress, greater democracy for the working people of your country and to further develop your views on the American path to socialism. Your Party has courageously fought for civil rights amidst great difficulties. We are confident that work of the delegates will advance cause that binds together working people of all lands, liberation from war, insecurity and exploitation of man by man.

National Executive Committee,

Labor Progressive Party of Canada

We deeply appreciate the invitation of the National Committee of your Party to send a fraternal delegation to the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party of the United States.

Since the trial of the principal leaders of our Party is scheduled to begin February 11th, we are not certain we will be able to send a fraternal delegation to the national convention that you are holding February 9-12, 1957.

\* List of greetings appears on page 351.

Nevertheless we wish to extend our best wishes for the success of your national convention and hopes that your Party will emerge united with a political orientation that will permit it to make the action of the working class and people of the United States effective for the achievement of peace, social well-being, respect for equality and democratic rights and the recognition of the national independence of peoples.

Fraternally,

Communist Party of Puerto Rico  
Ramon Mirabal, General Secretary

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia send militant comradely greetings to the 16th national convention of your Party. Our Party and all the Czechoslovak people hold in high regard the courageous struggle of American Communists who under very difficult conditions consistently defend the interests of the workers, farmers and all the working people of the United States, fight undaunted against feverish arming and for the preservation of peace and peaceful coexistence between all countries. We firmly believe that your convention will further strengthen the Marxist-Leninist unity of your Party and its fighting capacity. Long live the Communist Party of the United States. May the unity of the Communist and workers' parties leading the working people to a happy future grow ever stronger on the basis of Marxist-Leninist teaching.

Central Committee of the  
Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

On the occasion of your 16th National Convention, we extend to you our fraternal greetings and good wishes.

The Italian Communists, engaged, in accordance with the decisions of the VIIIth Congress in the struggle for an Italian road to Socialism, follow with lively interest the efforts and the experiences which the brother parties, having in common the same cause, carry out in the particular conditions flowing from their own traditions, from the class relationships and national characteristics of their own country.

This struggle of ours is the best contribution which we consider we must make to the great international working class movement of which we are part.

Faithful to the spirit of proletarian in-

ternationalism, we are convinced that the solidarity of all fraternal parties is essential for the development and success of the common struggle for peace, freedom and the independence of peoples and for the victory of socialism in the world.

In this spirit, in the name of the Italian Communist Party, we wish your convention fruitful work and full success in the strengthening and further development of a working class party guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism, in the struggles which you will undertake for peace, progress, democracy and socialism.

For the Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Italy  
Palmiro Togliatti

*Ch.:* We have received two greetings from the Communist Party of France. The first arrived on January 21st signed by Jacques Duclos. The second arrived last night by cablegram from the Central Committee of France. It has been decided to read both of these greetings to the convention.

To Comrade William Z. Foster  
To the Executive Committee, CPUSA

Dear Comrades:

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of France received with great pleasure the invitation of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of the United States to send a delegation to its 16th Convention.

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CP of France warmly thanks the Executive Committee of the CPUSA for this. We take great pleasure in informing you that we have designated a delegation of two members to be present at the 16th Convention. These comrades are Raymond Guyot, member of the Political Bureau and Maurice Kniegel-Valrimont, member of the Central Committee. We have requested visas and we hope that the American authorities will place no obstacles preventing the arrival of our comrades in the U.S.

While awaiting the decision of the State Department on this request for

visas, we would like to express to your Party as a whole and its leadership the interest which the holding of your 16th National Convention has evoked in our Party, by exchanging with you some opinions relating to the general political situation of the Communist movement. We have attentively studied the stages in the discussion opened in your Party and which will constitute the essential work of your 16th Convention. This concerns, in general, the determination, in 1957, of the role, the ideology and the organization of the Party of the working class in your country.

We understand the difficulties and the special character with which a Communist Party can be faced in a country like the United States where the power of monopoly capitalism imposes special forms of ideological, political and social oppression and where the labor movement is often penetrated with non-Marxist ideology.

However, the history of the American labor movement is rich in magnificent struggles. It is precisely these special characteristics of the implacable iron heel and of the spirit of struggle which makes it more necessary for the Party of the working class to remain firm on the principles of class struggle so that the interests of the workers are always correctly defended and the social future of the country assured. Only the Communist Party can guarantee that.

But also, the Communist Party can play its role of revolutionary Party of the working class acting in the interest of all the people and the nation only if it is built and fights in the framework of the fundamental principles which have been tested in other countries, in the first place in the Soviet Union, thanks to the victory of October 1917; only if it determines its internal life and its political struggle in the framework of the principles of Marxism-Leninism; only if it fights for its leading role in the revolutionary struggle for Socialism.

In examining with great attention the opinions expressed by different comrades in your discussion, and the official documents like the Draft Resolution for the Convention, the November 6th statement of the Communist Party of the U.S. concerning the events in Poland and Hungary and other documents, we believe that we

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

43

discern dangerous departures from these principles; we have at the same time, however, been happy to see that a more profound study of the real facts has already permitted you to make certain precisions and happy corrections for our common cause and the future of the Communist Party of the United States.

The class struggle was and remains the motor of history and it is only a Marxist-Leninist Party which can extract its laws and make the working class victorious in its struggle against capitalism; the *dictatorship of the proletariat* is the indispensable, inevitable arm for the exercise of the power by the working class allied with the farmers, whatever are the particular forms of transition from capitalism to socialism; all that which can weaken or deny the class struggle and the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat is contrary to the interests of the social revolution, is contrary to Marxism-Leninism.

Leninism, the development and victorious application of Marxism, has in our opinion as French Communists, prodigiously achieved the building of the Communist Party and of socialism in the USSR, in China and in other countries.

The universal truth of Marxism-Leninism could not be denied by any true Communist. It is not true that the Leninist principles of the building of the Party and socialism would only be valid in the Soviet Union, that the socialist system would not have permanent worth, taking into account national characteristics which, in particular, Lenin advised should be carefully taken into account. To deviate from these basic conceptions is to slide into the morass of social-democratic opportunism; still more, it is to fall into liquidationist revisionism, that is to say, to turn one's back on the revolution, on Communism, the class struggle; it is to play the game of Project X, of the reactionary plots organized on the basis of Mutual Security Laws, as in Hungary.

We who had to face the highly organized offensive of the criminals and assassins of the counter-revolutionary reaction of last November 7th and who smashed it, together with the working class of France November 8th and 13th, we understand the difficulty which you had to face in relation to the events in Poland and Hungary. But it is now well known to American

workers that the real organizers of these events of the imperialist plan of counter-revolution (who exploited the errors of men and not of the system) are the supporters of the "Freedom Crusade," the Harlow Curtices, Cecil Morgans, Willy Prices, Frank Stantons, Howard Shephards, Joseph Grews, Henry Lucas and others, Foster and Allen Dulles, Major E. Jackson, General Donovan, who commanded the ex-generals of Horthy, the Ferenc Nagys, and Mindszentys.

If irresponsible Petofi circles were able, precisely by sliding into liquidationist revisionism, to play the game of these counter-revolutionary bands, by deceiving the workers, it is no less true that the whole affair was the realization of a plan of imperialism, in order to split apart and destroy the camp of socialism and the Communist movement. The worst would be that some Communists would be taken in, having denied already in principle the role of imperialism. The worst yet would be that "revisionism" pretends to question everything and, instead of fighting with ever greater intensity and firmness against capitalism, imperialism and reaction—leads the revolutionary movement to "democratic" reformism, to the deception of "democratic liberties," to have confidence in the bourgeoisie to achieve a "democratic socialism."

The French Communists consider that they must not modify their program, but make more precise its class character and make their tactic of struggle more flexible. They consider that the class struggle is sharpening on the international scale in proportion as the camp of socialism is strengthened, the camp which has opposed to it a more and more split coalition composed of capitalist governments led by that of Washington—or rather by Wall Street. That is why they attach a great importance to the life and struggles of the Communist Party of the United States. That is why the refinement, the deepening, the clarification of the spirit of proletarian internationalism have such a considerable importance for your Communist Party and for the whole Communist world movement, in order to check the splitters of the camp of socialism, the saboteur elements of the workers' and socialist movements, the agents of the imperialist fomenters of war.

The strengthening of international soli-

ilarity of the proletariat—thus of the national parties of the working class is considered by us as one of the categorical imperatives of the present period of the international class struggle, which implies solidarity with the foreign policy of the Soviet Union corresponding to the essential interests of the international proletariat, of Peace and Socialism, to the interests of the independence movements of the oppressed and dependent countries in the world.

That is why any penetration of the echoes of the anti-Communist and anti-Soviet campaign in our ranks must be answered by an unrelenting resistance and pitiless rebuff.

We are happy, dear comrades, to be able freely and fraternally to exchange our opinions with you for the success of our common cause. We wish your Convention fruitful and valuable work for the Communist movement in the U.S.

With the hope that our delegation can attend your 16th Convention, we send you our fraternal greetings.

For the Central Committee of the  
CP of France  
Jacques Duclos  
Member of the Political Bureau  
Secretary of the Central Committee

Paris, Feb. 8, 1957

Message from the Central Committee of the French Communist Party to the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of the United States.

William Z. Foster  
101 West 16th Street  
New York

Dear Comrades:

The Central Committee of the French Communist Party warmly greets the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of the United States, a congress whose work unfolds in a troubled and dangerous period. It is evident that following the setback of the aggression against Egypt by the Franco-British imperialists and their accomplices of the Israeli government, American imperialism is seeking with the Eisenhower Doctrine to plunge the world again into the cold war in order to realize its expansionist aims and plans for world domination.

The Central Committee of the French

Communist Party regrets very much that its delegation cannot attend your congress because of the denial of visas by the rulers of the United States. This does not prevent these rulers from speaking unceasingly of liberty. The facts expose once again the hypocrisy of the imperialists of the United States who cynically violate liberty, feed racism, attack the sovereignty of nations, and set up obstacles to the organization of peace, at the same time as they slander the countries of the camp of socialism who make peaceful coexistence the fundamental rule of their foreign policy.

Despite the absence of representatives of the Communists and workers of France from your congress, the militants of our Party will follow the work of your congress with an interest all the greater because they attach considerable importance to the future of the Communist movement in the United States.

We know that your Party is struggling under difficult conditions and must confront attacks of a ferocious class enemy which combine systematic anti-Communist repression with very strong ideological pressure upon the workers in order to prevent the working class from determining and following an independent policy. Nevertheless, the history of the American labor movement is rich in magnificent struggles. It is precisely these special features of the implacable iron heel and of the spirit of struggle of the workers which oblige a party of the working class to stand firmly on the principles of the class struggle in order that the interests of the workers will always be properly defended, in order that the social future of the country will be assured.

Only the Communist Party can guarantee that. The experience of the international workers' movement shows that one cannot stand up victoriously against the assaults of the enemy except by remaining faithful to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Only in this way can a working-class party develop soundly and surely the struggle of the popular masses against imperialism, against war and for socialism.

We have the firm hope that the Communists of the United States will know how to avoid the pitfalls which they may encounter on the road of revolutionary struggle and will not depart from the fundamental principles of Marxism-Lenin-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

45

ism which have been tested in other countries, especially in the Soviet Union and China.

After the events which international capitalism provoked during these last months and which it seeks to exploit precisely to divide the world movement of Communism, the imperative thing for every Communist Party is the clarification and deepening of the principles of proletarian internationalism in the course of checking those who would divide the workers' and socialist movement, reinforcing the unity of the ranks of the Party, enriching the methods of the class struggle, strengthening the international solidarity of the proletariat around the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union whose XXth Congress has opened for the entire workers' movement immense possibilities of development. It is to this that our French Communist Party is firmly attached. We who have had to confront the offensive of the incendiary criminals and assassins of counter-revolutionary reaction last November 7th and who shattered it together with the French working class from the 8th to the 13th of November, we understand the difficulty which you have had to face in connection with the events in Hungary. But it is now much easier to help the workers grasp who are the true organizers of these events, in particular of the counter-revolution in Hungary.

We are convinced that in their 16th Convention, the Communists of the United States, drawing inspiration from the experience of the world Communist movement, will determine their national policy while taking into account the documents of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of the Chinese Communist Party, of the Socialist Workers Party of Hungary, as well as the communiques published following the recent conferences among various fraternal parties. All of these documents re-affirm the established (*sacred*, "*untouchable*") principles of Marxism-Leninism and in particular the need for class vigilance.

The French Communist Party sends its fraternal wishes to the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of the United States for success in its work for the well-being of the American working class and of the exploited Negro people, for international solidarity, for peace and for socialism.

Long live the Communist Party of the United States, vanguard of the working class in the struggle for the true democracy of the people.

Long live proletarian internationalism.  
Long live Communism.

Central Committee of the  
French Communist Party.

[Response appears on page 245.]

*Ch.:* The Chair now calls on Comrade Eugene Dennis for the Keynote Address.

*Eugene Dennis:* Comrades and Friends:

For well known reasons I was not able to be with you at the time of our 15th National Convention in December 1950. In the interim, we were scattered to the four winds, figuratively speaking, and due to no fault of our own, were not able to convene a national convention earlier. Now that we have assembled again I wish to convey warmest and comradely greetings to all my fellow delegates. I also wish to extend a hearty welcome to all our honored guests and to our distinguished observers. By way of caution, if not compassion, I desire to inform you that my address is neither an overall, nor an abridged report. The only general, comprehensive reports for this convention, are those to be submitted in the form of the amended Draft Resolution and Constitution. My opening remarks, therefore, will be limited in scope and subject matter, and it is with this understanding that I will now proceed.

In the course of its 38 years of existence, our American Communist Party has weathered a good many storms, and more than one stormy convention.

This convention meets at an especially difficult moment in our Party's history. We have been engaged in a painful and searching effort to correct past errors, to surmount losses sustained during the cold-war decade, to overcome our relative isolation, as well as to probe a host of new problems arising out of the changing world in which we live. This already protracted endeavor is by no means over. But we anticipate that our Convention will go forward, making some imperative changes and that we shall emerge a wiser, stronger, and a more united party.

Our problems are part of those confronting the American working class as a whole, some of these arise from the objective situation which, together with new opportunities, presents difficulties for all of America's working people. Attempts to revive the cold war, to suppress the Negro people's struggle for equality, to shackle the trade unions with the Taft-Hartley Act persecutions and "right-to-work" laws, and to rob the workers of the benefits of automation and atomic energy—affect Communists and non-Communists alike.

It is to equip our Party to cope with this complex situation, especially to play a more active and in-

fluent role in the rising struggles of labor, the Negro people, and the peace forces—that we are determined to solve our own grave internal problems.

Of course, the vested corporate interests are not going to make our task any easier. Reaction continues its campaign of repressions; and monopoly's ideologists step up their psychological warfare against Marxism, socialism, and all progressive thought and activity.

\* \* \*

Starting with the April National Committee meeting, our Party took some important first steps toward grappling with the most pressing of our many complicated problems. We correctly emphasized, among other things, the urgent need to eliminate from our ranks all dogmatic views and sectarian and bureaucratic practices. Shortly thereafter we laid the basis for further progress by approving the main political approach of the Draft Resolution, and submitted the Draft for general discussion and amendment.

But, during this same period, when the facts in the Khrushchev speech on Stalin became known in this country, and again after the tragic events in Hungary, important sections of the Party at *all* levels were temporarily disoriented and demobilized. Some tried to start a stampede. Some wandered into strange pastures; while others ex-



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

47

hibited a hardening of the political arteries.

Temporarily thrown off balance, the Party began to become enmeshed in a bitter and divisive internal struggle, and was in danger of being torn apart. In this situation, the struggle against doctrinairism and for effecting big and long overdue changes in our functioning and style of work, in our relationships with masses, as well as the fight against revisionist tendencies, became hampered by factional attitudes and extremism.

Without going into the matter fully, I believe all of us on the National Committee must share responsibility for this situation. But some of the N.C. members who, at least until recently, clung to inflexible policies and pursued extreme political objectives will perhaps take on themselves more than the common share.

Fortunately, as the zero hour approached and the danger of a split in the Party loomed as a possibility, substantial sections of our membership and some of the leadership rose to the occasion. As distinct from the conciliators of either the "Right" or the "Left," they began to intervene forcefully. They combined a resolute struggle to save the Party, defend its Marxist-Leninist principles and make the necessary changes, *with* an all-out effort to preserve its unity.

Our task here is greatly facilitated by the partial success of these principled efforts to achieve Party unity, which had a positive effect on many state conventions. I am sure we all

appreciate the special contribution made by the New York State convention when it achieved unity on the thorny question of Name and Form, and on support for the general line of the Draft Resolution as supplemented by appropriate amendments.

As a result of the New York and several other state conventions, it is clear that the bulk of our members have affirmed the continuance of our Communist Party and opposed its replacement by a political action association. They have overwhelmingly re-emphasized their unshakable conviction that the American workers, like the workers in every other country, need an independent, working class, Marxist-Leninist vanguard organization devoted to the welfare of our people and the national interests of our country. They have also made it clear that any and all proposals to change the name, form, or policies of the Party can and should be examined and discussed on their merits, in accordance with regular Party procedures—in accordance with the provisions of the Draft Constitution.

It is true we still have many serious differences in our ranks on a host of important questions, some of which we shall not be able to resolve at this convention. Nonetheless, we are now in a position to hammer out a collective and unified approach to many programmatic questions and to most of the pressing issues facing us and the American people generally.

This is not wishful thinking; and we should not let the heat of controversy obscure this important fact. For it is significant that most state conventions, while submitting various and much-needed amendments, have approved the main political direction of the Draft Resolution which is based on a sound, scientific socialist approach to our own American conditions and problems.

\* \* \*

Thus there is substantial agreement that the world forces of peace now definitely outweigh those making for world war, and that hence the peace aspirations common to all peoples, including our own, have become more attainable.

World war is no longer inevitable. If the popular peace forces everywhere, together with the socialist, the Bandung and neutral states, actively unite their efforts—world war can be successfully averted.

In approving this estimate, on which the Draft Resolution bases its outlook of a realistic perspective for promoting peaceful coexistence, most state conventions have correctly stressed the reactionary and aggressive role of U.S. imperialism. They have emphasized the need for vigilance and struggle against the provocative Eisenhower-Dulles Mid-East Doctrine, the atomic war buildup, and other sinister attempts to revive the cold war.

Yet most have recognized that even such explosive events as the British-French-Israeli aggression in Egypt and the imperialist-backed at-

tempt at counter-revolution in Hungary have not reversed or cancelled out the basic world trends and relationships making for peace.

While these developments aggravated international tensions and jeopardize the peace, the strength of the peace camp was and is so dynamic and powerful that the aggressors in Egypt were quickly checkmated, and the imperialist designs in Hungary were thwarted. Obviously, the world of 1956 is qualitatively different from that of 1946, not to speak of 1936.

Nonetheless, the American people know all too well that we are not free of the danger of an atomic holocaust. They recognize in the H-bomb tests the possible rehearsal for such horrors, and see that the radiation from these tests already threatens the health and future of the entire human race.

This is why the mass of the people in our country are prepared to help assure that a third world war will never occur. The peace sentiments of the American people helped bring peace to Korea and facilitated the Summit meeting at Geneva. These peace aspirations are an integral part of the new world relationship of forces which can yet assure the fulfillment of the great promise of Geneva. Thus it is that around the paramount issue of peace, the basis now exists for united action with the widest sectors of the American people, including with many Social-Democratic and reformist leaders and groups in and outside of the ranks of organized labor.

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

49

General agreement has also been expressed on the Draft Resolution's estimate that conditions are maturing which will make possible the crystallization of an anti-monopoly coalition led by labor, embracing wide strata of trade unionists, farmers, the Negro people, small businessmen, scientists and cultural workers.

For the coming period this is the main strategic task, the concrete way to curb the monopolies, effect a new democratic political alignment, and pave the way to significant social advance.

This convention will no doubt help to deepen our understanding of all that is implied by an anti-trust and democratic coalition led by labor, particularly as it probes deeper into the effects of the giant corporate mergers and the economic situation and trends within the country. But our common understanding of this concept will best be advanced as we work to popularize this idea which we, as a vanguard, have projected, especially in the course of our active participation in the mass political and economic struggles now unfolding.

The state conventions further affirmed the Draft Resolution's emphasis on the democratization of the South as the Number One task for the *whole* nation. They responded enthusiastically to the need for strengthening Negro-white unity, especially the alliance of labor and the Negro people; for mobilizing all-out support to the Negro people's great

and heroic struggles in the South, as well as everywhere in the country; and for stimulating the drive for the trade-union organization of the unorganized in the South on the basis of Negro-white unity.

Just what we *mean* by placing the struggle to democratize the South as the nation's Number One task will best be spelled out by what *we do* to make it the Number One task for our whole Party and those whom we influence.

\* \* \*

The Draft Resolution's concept of our advocacy of and endeavor to chart a peaceful, democratic, and constitutional road to socialism in America has also been approved overwhelmingly. For this concept expresses what we American Communists strive for, and is a further development of our established position. It embodies our basic view that socialism can be established only through a radical and fundamental extension of American democracy and a revolutionary transformation of all property relations. And it emphasizes that *all* roads to socialism are roads of mass struggle, waged under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist vanguard. But now this concept takes on new meaning in light of the profoundly new and favorable changes in world relationships.

The state conventions also reflect a serious effort to come to grips with the complex question of how we ful-

fill our vanguard role under changed conditions, at a time when the merged AFL-CIO and other influential mass organizations are giving day-to-day leadership in many important economic, social, and legislative struggles.

There is an increased realization that the Left, inclusive of the Communists and other socialist-minded forces, has a special contribution to make in the struggle for militant and united labor action; for defending the economic interests, rights, and social welfare of labor and its allies; for trade-union autonomy and democracy; for organizing the unorganized; for advancing the struggle for Negro rights—including in the unions and on the job; for promoting independent political action and a broad people's democratic alliance, having as one of its initial objectives to break the Dixiecrat-GOP roadblock in Congress; and for promoting labor's solidarity at home and abroad.

There is also a growing understanding in our ranks that trade-union militancy does not automatically grow into socialist consciousness; and that even very big struggles do not imbue labor with class consciousness, or spontaneously make the working class aware of its *class role* in leading the nation to the next big democratic and social advance.

The state conventions further reveal that we are agreed on the need to put an end to harmful bureaucratic practices, to the distortions of democratic centralism, which plagued us in the past and led to

many violations of inner-party democracy. There is emphatic agreement on the paramount importance of democratizing our Party.

There is also a realization that the more truly democratic we become, the more we need to be a cohesive and united organization which guarantees the minority's right to dissent at *all* times, but does not at *any* time give it a veto power over policies and programs of action that have won majority support.

Further, I believe that there is much sober thought being given to what we mean by a new and sounder relationship with other Marxist parties, including those in the socialist countries.

We American Communists, who have always constituted an independent American political party, have been unaffiliated with and organizationally independent of other Marxist parties for nearly twenty years. But we are only now beginning to get straight on the need for achieving full independence of thought within the framework of a common Marxist ideology; on the need to combine our unshakable feelings of close fraternal solidarity with all Marxist parties *with* the understanding of the equality, creative responsibilities, and the independence of our own indigenous Communist movement.

There is no contradiction between the true national interests of our own people and the common working-class interests of the peoples of all countries. It is by starting with the

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

51

needs and interests of our own people and by creatively utilizing the science of Marxism-Leninism to help solve the problems of the American people, to effectively resist and help check the predatory drive of monopoly capital,—that we will best promote international working-class solidarity and peace, that we will best advance the friendship and anti-imperialist cooperation of the peoples of the USA and Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe.

We still have a long way to go to grasp the new relationships now developing among Marxist parties. For the habits of nearly a life-time are very difficult to break. It will take a long time to overcome the deeply ingrained tendencies to try to apply mechanically the experiences of other Marxist parties, and to view uncritically, unscientifically, some of their analyses.

But in struggling to eradicate these habits, we re-affirm that there are universally valid Marxist principles. We condemn cynicism of and hostility to the socialist countries and to their Marxist parties. We reject any view which sees only the gross violations of socialist principles which have occurred, but does not see the historical achievements of the USSR, the Peoples Republic of China and the other lands of socialism, and the processes of self-correction and dynamic advance of these new social systems which are now taking place.

Despite the "critics" of socialism, it is the world of imperialism that is in profound crisis, is becoming smaller and is torn apart by insolu-

ble contradictions, whereas the socialist third of the world is not "falling apart," but is growing stronger. It embraces almost a billion people who are building a new society in which the working people, for the first time in history, are shaping their own destiny. And it is *this* development which makes it possible to prevent another world war and to achieve peaceful coexistence.

We welcome and are proud of the fraternal greetings we have received at this convention from so many Communist Parties of other lands. We appreciate their observations and expressions of solidarity. And we are not taken aback by the fact that among these valued greetings, here and there, there may be an open or an implied note of criticism.

In our judgment, mutual fraternal exchanges of opinion and criticism among Marxist parties is a beneficial and necessary development. We believe it is most useful when exercised in a scientific, objective, and comradely way, on the basis of equality and fraternity.

It is in this spirit that we are happy to receive the greetings of all brother parties. In respect to the misgivings expressed in the greetings signed by Jacques Duclos, let me say that we American Communists firmly believe in our great majority that the main line of our convention resolutions is Marxist-Leninist in content and fully in accord with the interests and democratic traditions of our country, with proletarian solidarity and with the new and ever developing generalized experience of the in-

ternational working class.

In any case, our decisions will be our own, made by the collective judgment of this convention, and will be based on *our* Marxist understanding of American reality and the needs of our people and nation.

\* \* \*

After making the necessary amendments, this convention, I trust, will adopt the Draft Resolution and the new Constitution. It will also act upon a much-needed program of immediate action. In mapping out such a program, I hope the convention will consider what can be done independently by the Party, as well as what we can do in cooperation with others to help promote the broadest kind of unity of action.

I hope we shall get away from rigidly conceived national campaigns, but rather seek flexibly to focus attention locally and in the states on specific issues already projected by the labor and people's movements.

High among these are such vital demands as: enforcement of desegregation everywhere; reduction of the arms budget; cutting of taxes on low income groups; introduction of the 30-hour week; extension of social security; repeal of all legislation which violates the Bill of Rights; banning all H-bomb tests and atomic weapons; the calling of a new Summit Conference.

Whatever program of action we project for the coming months, I am

To pose these key questions is to suggest that one of our special and major contributions will be made in the ideological arena. I am not sure we shall give high priority to waging a many-sided struggle for the enactment of a federal civil rights program. I hope that this program will lay special stress on what can be done to get city councils and state legislatures, as well as trade-union locals and civic and church organizations, to memorialize Congress and the President, as well as to act on urgent community and shop demands to end all jimcrow practices in housing, schools, and employment.

This kind of activity would get down to the grass roots level, and, at the same time, exert effective influence on Congress and the Administration, on state legislatures and municipal councils, as well as on the national mass organizations of the people.

I strongly recommend a similar approach to the supremely important issue of banning the genocidal H-bomb tests and weapons.

Whatever else this Convention does, it must at least lay the foundations for grappling with these big mass problems which have been neglected in the heat of our internal struggle: *how* to expand our working-class base, ties, and influence; *how* to help promote the united action of labor, of Negro and white, of the people against the trusts, the white supremacists and the warmongers.

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

53

posing we become a Brain Trust, or act like self-appointed "idea men" for the existing mass organizations. On the contrary. We must ourselves engage more fully in all mass struggles if we are to aid these movements to attain their objectives, to go forward and to deepen their understanding of all economic, social and political issues.

The battle of ideas—in which the monopolists have for too long maintained the initiative—is bound to grow much sharper as we move deeper into the age of atomic energy and automation. Both their good and evil potentialities are becoming apparent to millions of Americans. But these millions are not yet aware of their collective power to decide the outcome, and are still less conscious that the die can be cast against catastrophe only through a united and resolute mass anti-monopoly movement, led by the working class.

Within this context there are, and will be, new opportunities to advance our basic socialist aims and concepts. We should exercise a new initiative to make known what we are doing here to develop our program, to widen the exchange of views among those of socialist persuasion, and to reach new sections of the working class with the goals, ideas, and principles of scientific socialism, of Marxism-Leninism.

To bring to the millions, already concerned about the future, greater consciousness of why and how its shape will be determined by con-

certed popular mass action to curb and eventually break the power of the monopolies—this is labor's and our greatest challenge. The place to carry on this education is in every school of experience where large numbers of people are learning through mass activity.

In this connection, the *Daily* and *Sunday Worker*, and the magazine, *Political Affairs*, can be exceptionally significant. This requires that we take extraordinary measures to preserve them and to increase their circulation and use, and markedly improve their Marxist content and readability.

\* \* \*

In emphasizing all of these questions, I do not mean to imply that we are already out of the woods of our internal difficulties, or that the crucial question of Party unity has already been settled.

On the contrary. We still have sharp and unresolved differences on a host of vital questions. We still face inflexible tendencies to crystallize an extreme polarization of views which foster dangerous divisions and factionalism.

Therefore one of the central questions before this Convention is: What are some of the prerequisites for achieving that principled unity which is indispensable to the life and progress of our Party, to enable us to enhance our contributions to our people and country?

Communist unity can be forged and maintained only on the basis of

working class, Marxist-Leninist principles. These scientific and universally valid principles must be fought for firmly, and in a comradely spirit.

But it is not enough to recite or proclaim these Marxist principles. They must be grasped scientifically and applied creatively in accord with the concrete conditions of our country and the needs of the American working class. We need to study more deeply the science of Marxism-Leninism *and* American traditions and conditions. We need to synthesize and enrich these, bearing in mind the big and favorable changes in the world *and* the new trends developing in our own country.

Our unity must be founded on a common policy and on a practical program of mass activity that expresses the interests of the people, and the collective experience and the will of the majority of the Party membership. I am confident that the political orientation and the changes proposed in the amended Draft Resolution and the Draft Constitution will provide a sound basis for such unity, and that it will be further strengthened by the subsequent drafting and adoption of a basic Party program.

I believe too that what has happened in regard to Party unity and the lessons of the past decade underscore the great need for boldly refreshing our Party leadership at all levels, for effecting a united team which embodies the best of the old and the new, with special stress on

Negro, shop, trade union, women, and youth representation.

\* \* \*

Let me also suggest a few additional guideposts to aid us as we strive to weld the unbreakable unity our Party so sorely needs:

(1) The enemy of the American people is our enemy. That enemy is not here in Houston Street; its headquarters is in Wall Street. The differences that divide us here are not irreconcilable contradictions arising from a conflict of class interests. They are essentially conflicting opinions of Communists which have to be hammered out collectively, in comradely discussion.

(2) We must therefore not permit criticism of the Party's errors to degenerate into undermining the sterling contributions and role of our Party. We must make sure that all our criticism is constructive, that it deals with issues on their merits, that it does not degenerate into personal vilification, and that it does not give the class opponent comfort or political ammunition. We may use a sharp surgical knife to cut away the chronic disease of dogmatism or to curb the growth of revisionism. But let us not forget that our purpose is to save and strengthen the Party, and that no operation can be considered successful if it leaves the patient low in morale, mutilated and half-dead.

(3) We must use our heads—not lose them. It is better to make haste slowly than to improvise gimmicks in the false hope that we can come up



with all the answers at once. And in this respect, we must understand that this Convention cannot definitely decide all questions with which we are confronted.

(4) We must guard against one-sidedness in our thinking, our work, our decisions. For instance, I believe my report to the April National Committee meeting was correct in emphasizing as the main danger the serious left-sectarian errors of the past and in sharply calling attention to our weakness and defects for the purpose of highlighting the crucial need to overcome them.

However, that report would have been better balanced if it had presented more fully the positive and noteworthy contributions of our Party during the cold-war decade, and if it had forewarned more explicitly against the growth of right-opportunist tendencies in our sharp turn against Left-sectarianism.

The curse of one-sidedness has become even more pronounced since the emergence of new problems and points of controversy. This is all too evident in the approach of many comrades to the inter-acting dangers of left-sectarianism and right-opportunism—both of which are clear and present today.

Dogmatism and doctrinairism are still the main danger, and will be the main danger and the chief obstacle to effecting a decisive turn in our relations with masses for some time to come. They are too deep-seated to be eradicated by the mere

adoption of resolutions. They still afflict our mass work and policies. They even lead to a narrow and undialectical approach to such profound Marxist-Leninist documents as the recent statement of the Communist Party of China, "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."\*

Therefore it is necessary to wage the most resolute and systematic struggle against dogmatism and left-sectarianism. At the same time, we must sharpen up and wage a more determined struggle against opportunist and revisionist tendencies which, far from disappearing, are growing in our Party.

Another thing: in the process of correcting mistakes, whether of the "Left" or "Right" variety, we have too often failed to help friends and allies understand *what* it is we are trying to correct—and *why*. It does not necessarily follow that when we make changes in policy we also break off united front relationships, as we seem to have thought sometimes in the past. We are agreed that in many instances, our estrangement from the Left and Center forces in the trade unions was largely our fault. Let us try to correct our mistakes in a manner that will help end those estrangements and establish new mass ties and cooperative relations.

We are going to need a lot of patience with each other, and with old

\* Published in *Political Affairs*, Feb. 1957.—  
Ed.

friends and allies whose patience *we* have sometimes tried to the breaking point. In the past period some comrades have left us because of the impact of certain grievous departures from Leninist principles in the socialist countries, as well as because of our slowness in overcoming our own internal mistakes and difficulties. We should not forget that most of these stood firm during the roughest days of the cold war and McCarthyite hysteria, and that today most of them are not lacking in courage, and that many remain adherents of socialism.

Let us be slow to condemn the temporarily disoriented, and ever ready to help those who wish to find their way back eventually, or who presently may engage us in friendly discussion or join in united-front activity on certain specific issues. Let us distinguish between those who have been shaken by recent events and seek clarity, and those who have forsaken Marxist principles. But at all times let us vigorously defend the honor, integrity and morale of our Party.

Finally, let us remember that there is legitimate place in our ranks for differences of opinion, both before and after the majority arrives at a decision. But there is *no* place in our Party for factions or factionalism.

At this critical juncture in our Party's life and history, we would do well to heed the sage counsel of Abraham Lincoln: "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

If we collectively keep uppermost in our thinking and endeavors the common socialist aims and principles to which we are dedicated, then I am confident that our house shall stand and will be built ever stronger; and the ties of comradeship and high purpose which bind us and all other like-minded people can and will be strengthened.

\* \* \*

Comrades, today our Party is small in numbers and in many parts of the country is relatively limited in its mass influence. But we are learning from our mistakes. We are looking and moving forward. In the process we are beginning to establish new mass ties and relationships with valuable friends and allies.

Moreover, we are a party in league with the future, a party based upon and representing the fundamental interests of the American working class—Negro and white. We are an American party, based on the traditions of Sylvis, Debs, and Ruthenberg—and with ideological ties of fraternal kinship to the hundreds of millions moving toward world peace, national liberation, and socialism. We should not lose sight of that truth, even though now and then the winds shift.

Frederick Douglass once wisely observed that: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

Well, comrades, struggle is what we are going to have plenty of. For whatever the state of the economic barometer, political and economic

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

57

struggles of great magnitude lie ahead.

Labor, the Negro people, and the great mass of Americans are unwilling, as they are unable, to retreat before monopoly's offensive against their living standards, their democratic rights, and their peace aspirations. Nor are labor and the people, in this era of automation and atomic energy, either able or willing just to stand still. Our Party's ability to contribute more effectively to the American people's struggle to defend what they have won and take a giant step forward will depend, to no small extent, on how we meet the challenge that now confronts us.

Our task is indeed a difficult one. But if the convention tackles it boldly, with confidence in America's working people, and with truly creative Marxist-Leninist understanding, I am sure we will make the necessary changes and do what needs to be done. [Applause.]

[Additional greetings read from Bolivia, Japan, and messages of greetings from John Williamson in England and Andy Overgaard in Denmark.]

From the Communist Party of the Soviet Union:

To the 16th National Convention, Communist Party, U.S.A.:

Fraternal greetings to the 16th Convention of the CPUSA from the CP USSR. The Communists in our country are watching with warmest sympathy how your Party is coping with the great hardships imposed on you in the recent period. All the activities and struggles of your Party prove that you have no other interests than

the interests of the working class and all working people of the U.S.A.

The CPUSA consistently defends the democratic rights of the American people, continues and develops the best traditions of Lincoln, Jefferson, Debs and Ruthenberg and other outstanding sons of America. Your Party exposes the conspiracies of aggressive American circles attempting to turn the people toward a new war.

The American Communists are fighting heroically for the preservation of the Party, for strengthening the unity of its ranks on the basis of tested Marxist-Leninist principles. In its fight for the rights of the working class the CPUSA is striving to safeguard fraternal ideological relationships with other Communist and workers' parties which is sacred for the advanced workers of all countries on the principles of proletarian internationalism.

We wish the Party of the U.S.A. success in the struggle for the democratic rights of the American people—for the economic interests of the working class and all working people of the U.S.A., for the further ideological and organizational strengthening of the Party.

May the friendship and cooperation of the people of the Soviet Union and the people of the United States, for the mutual benefit of our countries and for peace in the whole world, strengthen and flourish.

Central Committee, CP USSR.

[Applause.]

*Ch.:* We have reached the scheduled time for the address of the Chairman of our Party, Comrade Bill Foster, who is seated here on my left, and I recognize at this time Comrade Ben Davis, who has been asked to read to the convention the remarks of Comrade Foster. (Applause.)

*William Z. Foster:* Comrades:  
The crisis afflicting our Party is

both organizational and ideological. Among its main origins are: the corruptive effects of imperialism upon the working class and the Party during the many years of "capitalist prosperity"; the protracted attack of the Government upon the Party; the many serious left-sectarian mistakes made by us during the cold war years; the negative results of the Stalin revelations; the serious Right mistakes of recent months—and all these factors operating in a rapidly changing national and world situation.

My remarks are not an opposition report to Comrade Dennis' keynote speech; they also do not constitute a separate program, nor are they so presented. They do, however, embrace fundamental steps necessary for the Party, and they have all been matters of serious dispute in the top leadership of the Party, of which the Convention is entitled to a clear picture. My remarks are not directed against the main resolution as such, but to amend, strengthen, and adopt it, as has been done in the various state conventions. The political demarcation in the Party has not been between supporters and opponents of the main resolution, but between those who want to maintain the Communist Party and those who would give it up for a political action association. Now to my specific remarks and proposals:

1. *Re-affirm the continued existence of the Communist Party:* By eliminating the central question of dispute in the Party—the political action association—this action is the main single thing the convention must accomplish. For months there has been an intense agitation in the Party by the Right tendency to the effect that we should transform the Communist Party into a political action association—as proposed concretely by Comrade Gates in the November 1956 number of *Political Affairs*. But such a step would mark the end of the Party as a fighting organization and would reduce it to a body of socialist propaganda. It would also largely liquidate our forces, because it could not have a mass character. It would likewise worsen our position among the broad masses, as it would be highly vulnerable to charges of being a sinister "boring-from-within" body. And it would provoke fresh governmental attacks upon us by appearing as a legal maneuver upon our part. The whole thing is only a resurrection of the discarded Browder Communist Political Association of 1944-45. Its formation would constitute a disastrous step backward for us in the face of militant American imperialism, and it would be so understood by our friends and foes.

The advocates of the association, which is the heart of the Right pro-

gram, have pressed it upon the Party with such vigor that the very life of the Party became threatened with a factional split. However, the rank and file, as soon as they grasped the import of the political action association, let it be known, in the conventions and in the press, that they did not want this liquidatory organization but were determined to maintain the Communist Party. This membership response caused the sponsors of the association to make a sudden move to save their project by by-passing the national convention. That is, the convention should not vote on the association, but should delegate the question to a continuing Party discussion, with its solution delayed indefinitely.

This is a dangerous proposal; if successful, it would sentence the Party to a protracted factional struggle over the issue, thereby imperiling the life of the Party. It would also be a grave violation of Party democracy, by preventing the delegates from voting on a vital matter which they had been discussing for months. Unfortunately, the National Committee, in its "Name and Form" Amendment III, supported the proposition. But again the rank and file had a different idea. In the state conventions they have been voting overwhelmingly for the Party and against an association.

In this respect, the New York

State convention spoke out very clearly and emphatically. Comrade Ben Davis introduced a resolution providing for an endorsement of the Party, a rejection of the association, and the reference of any further discussion on the matter to the National Committee. This proposition was well received by the delegates, and Comrade George Charney of the State Committee joined with Comrade Davis in re-introducing the resolution jointly as a unity proposal. With enthusiasm, the convention almost unanimously adopted it. This New York action points the main way to Party unity. If similar action is taken by this convention it will avert the danger of a split by removing the contentious association question from factional struggle.

In disposing of the political action association, however, let us not fall victims to a drive from the Right for a so-called new mass party of socialism. For such a body there is no prospect in the political situation, neither now nor in the foreseeable future. It must be held as a future perspective. Untimely action by us in this direction would be just about as harmful as turning the Party into a political action association. This convention should let it be known that it is resolved to build the Communist Party and not some futile, opportunistic substitute for it.

2. *Re-endorse the Party's theoret-*

*ical base of Marxism-Leninism:* To take this action decisively is of fundamental importance for the life and growth of the Communist Party. During the past year there has been an incessant campaign by the Right in the Party press and elsewhere against Marxism-Leninism. This has gone on virtually unchallenged by the National Board. They try to separate Marxism from Leninism. The central idea in this campaign is that, whereas Marxism is of universal validity, Leninism, as basically a product of the Russian Revolution, has only limited validity. Especially it is said to be left-sectarian so far as the United States is concerned. This is Right revisionism, which goes in the general direction of Social Democracy. If it should prevail in our ranks it would cut the heart out of American Communism.

Unfortunately, much of this incorrect line has been injected into our draft resolutions for the convention, including the main resolution, the constitution, and others. Thus, the term "Marxism-Leninism" was stricken from the Party preamble; the concept of the Party's vanguard role has been weakened, and democratic centralism has been rejected in principle. But worse yet, in the main resolution the Party's acceptance of Marxism-Leninism has been made conditional. This document

endorsed Marxism-Leninism only to the extent that it is "interpreted" by the C.P.U.S.A. Such a concept would at once strip Marxism-Leninism of its scientific and its international character and reduce it to a matter of innumerable national interpretations. This is an impossible position for a Communist Party. It was in an effort to get this concept changed that I voted against the resolution.

In its letter of greetings, signed by Secretary Jacques Duclos, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France is correct in warning us of revisionist tendencies in our Party. Many in our Party have been saying this for months past. And its truth is manifested by the many basic amendments made in our main resolution by the various state conventions. This convention should welcome the sage and friendly advice of our French comrades as well as others. Of course, the convention will work out its policies and estimates upon the basis of American and international conditions.

Obviously, we should support Marxism-Leninism, not as a dogma but as a guide to action. We should flexibly develop and apply it to specific American conditions, with a constant alert against every form of doctrinairism. At the same time, we must recognize the universal truth of the vast body of Marxism-Lenin-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

61

ism as the science of the world proletariat. These elementary facts were again made clear to us in the recent splendid document of the Chinese Communist Party. Our national convention should re-affirm clearly the Party's endorsement of Marxism-Leninism, and also take the necessary steps to cleanse its convention documents of the various revisionist conceptions that have been injected into them. Along with the re-affirmation of the Communist Party itself, this re-dedication to Marxism-Leninism is the most vital business before this convention.

During the long Party discussion the rank and file of the Party have also let their voice be heard upon this matter. They have declared unequivocally for a Marxist-Leninist Party. So clear has been their voice that some Party leaders who only a few months ago were speaking out against Marxism-Leninism, are now proclaiming themselves and the Party to be Marxist-Leninist. The national convention should declare its adherence to the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. Without such an unequivocal statement, our Party would be in danger of political bankruptcy.

3. *Changes in the Party's structure, policies, and methods:* In order to cope with the political urgency of the rapidly changing national and international situations, to lift the

Party out of its critical position, to apply the deep-going lessons of the Stalin cult of the individual, and generally to re-establish its mass strength and prestige, the CPUSA must improve itself in many directions: in its organization, in its ideology, in its leadership, in its policies, and in its methods of work. The whole Party is conscious of this need for change and progress.

Under the general head of "change," the Right tendency, however, advocates proposals which, if adopted, would be disastrous for the Party. Among them are: to abandon the Party for a political action association, to consider a "new mass Party of socialism" as an early possibility, to devitalize Marxism-Leninism, to develop a pro-Tito international course, and to destroy the progressive and heroic history of the Communist Party by a reckless, distorted and damaging criticism, as exemplified in the Schrank New York report, in the "Vanguard Role" Amendment, in the published trade union "material," and in various other documents.

Our Party does not need nor want such destructive projects of "change" as the Right tendency has been proposing. It does want, however, the numerous constructive changes that have been proposed in the Party discussion, many of which have been incorporated in conven-

tion documents. These include: Marxism-Leninism, freed from all forms of dogmatism and doctrinairism and closely developed and applied to the American situation; more Party democracy, less bureaucracy, and a Party discipline based upon democratic agreement and not upon "commands"; greater participation of the membership in policy-making; more genuine self-criticism by the leadership; a refreshment and reorganization of leading bodies upon a local, district, and national scale; broader united front practices and less sectarian conceptions of the Party's vanguard role; more cooperative relations with other American Left groupings; comradely criticism of brother Communist Parties and the countries of socialism; the cultivation of more political initiative by the Party, etc. In this spirit the convention should handle the general question of Party change and progress.

4. *Solve the Party leadership crisis:* For the past year especially, the Party has been experiencing a grave crisis of leadership, which is one of the major causes of its crisis in general. It has done far more to disorient the Party than the government attack upon us. This leadership crisis has been marked by many of the leaders going far to the Right themselves, or by their definitely conciliating the Right. Consequently, the top Party committees

have failed to give firm leadership to the Party during these critical months. This failure has much to do with the present low prestige of the leaders in the Party. In New York State the leadership crisis is particularly acute. It is a basic task of the convention to strengthen the Party leadership, especially in the National Committee and the National Board.

To this end there must be more worker members, and fresh leading forces brought in, especially mass-workers — proletarians, Negroes, youth, and women. We must become really the Party of the working class. The leadership must be required to practice more self-criticism and to operate within the framework of a democratic centralism closely keyed to American conditions and traditions. The Party especially needs staunch leaders—who believe in the Party and will fight for its program. We must have leaders with prestige, but we must not spoil them with adulation, and especially we must not allow them to develop bureaucratic habits. While reducing our excessive numbers of full-timers, we must also maintain a strong core of "professional revolutionaries."

One of the keys to the Party's present difficulties, and particularly to its leadership crisis, is the fact that during recent difficult months the Party has been led, especially in the National Board, by a working combination of the Right and



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

63

some comrades who, while not themselves Rights, nevertheless run a sort of political interference for the Right. The Right has its main strength in the New York State Committee and in the staff of the *Daily Worker*. It also acquires much help from the above described conciliationism. This is the main reason why, in the Board, the Right, although a minority in the Party, has been able to write so much of its line into the policy and convention documents of the Party. To eliminate such conciliation practices is one of the important changes needed by the Party.

5. *The ideological fight on two fronts:* A major cause of the confusion in our Party during the past year has been the abandonment by the Party leadership of the Leninist policy of the fight on two fronts. When the National Committee began its sharp attack against left-sectarianism at its April meeting, it was necessary also to issue a warning against the outcropping Right danger. This was an ABC matter of practical need to prevent a pendulum swing to the Right, for this wrong trend also had roots in the Party. But this was not done, and those who proposed that attention be paid to the rapidly sprouting Right were accused of trying to cover up left-sectarian mistakes. Not until September was a warning issued against the Right

danger, and this was so toothless that even the comrades on the Right voted for it. Not until this day has the national leadership made any serious criticism of Right tendencies in the Party. The general result has been that the Right has grown like a bay tree.

The national convention should change this impossible situation by putting the Party's ideological struggle on a two-front basis, with the main weight directed against left-sectarianism. This is the traditional weakness of the Party, especially with regard to doctrinairism and wrong methods of work, as was especially manifest during the difficult cold war years of struggle against fascism and the war danger. I myself made my share of these errors of the characteristic sectarian type of the period. It is a misjudgment of my position, however, to allege that I now underestimate them. If I have not seemed to dwell upon them so much as some other comrades, it was because my attention has been directed so largely towards defending our basic theory of Marxism-Leninism and also the very existence of our Party itself from the sweeping attacks that were being made by the Right against them.

The danger from the Right has been discussed very little during these past months, although it is now threatening the life of the Party. It

has its main roots in the "prosperity illusions" generated among the workers and in our Party, and by the many-years-long boom period. Thus, this Right tendency is a direct political descendant of the Lovestone opportunism of the boom 1920's and the Browder revisionism of the boom 1940's. The Right trend manifests itself by a softening of the Party's theory and fighting policies, and it points in the direction of class collaboration. It has worsened all the problems that the Party has had to contend with during the past period. Its main outlook is for a minimum of class struggle; it seeks to emasculate Marxism-Leninism; it plays down the Negro question, and it makes the parliamentary road to socialism appear as a mild evolutionary advance, instead of the sharp class struggle that it will be. The danger of the Right tendency has been fully demonstrated by the bitter factional struggle it has been carrying on during recent months for its proposal to transform the Communist Party into a political action association.

6. *For a class struggle program of work:* It is fundamental that this convention should produce an effective program of immediate tasks and should organize the Party to put this into effect. It should also lay the basis for a general Party program, embracing such questions as an anal-

ysis of the industrial outlook, a re-statement of the Negro question, the perspective for a Labor-Farmer party, a rehandling of basic trade union questions, a clear statement of the American road to socialism, and many other problems—all this, of course, to be tied in with the Party's fight for an anti-monopoly coalition.

The Right tendency in the Party, like that of Lovestone and Browder before it, tends to overestimate the strength of American imperialism. It plays down the effects of the general crisis of world capitalism, so far as the United States is concerned. For the Right, too, the possibility of a serious American economic crisis is virtually excluded. The inevitable conclusion from such ideas is a perspective of little class struggle, as illustrated in Comrade Gates' article in the November 1956 *Political Affairs*, and of sharp tendencies to minimize the vanguard role of the Communist Party. Such trends have been injected into the published material for a trade-union resolution, in which class collaboration, the policy of the AFL-CIO top leadership, is glossed over as of no particular importance, instead of being characterized as a deadly danger.

Contrary to such revisionist ideas, our Party must base itself squarely upon an outlook of sharpening class struggle. It must realize that world

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

65

capitalism is sinking into general crisis in the face of the rising socialist world, and that the United States, although still very powerful, is no basic exception to the general capitalist crisis. The present high industrial activity in the United States is essentially temporary in character. The workers, the Negro people, and other democratic strata, face a perspective of increasing class struggle, in which they will be compelled to defend their living standards, their organizations, and their civil liberties. It is upon such a perspective that we should base our tasks and general program, and not one of a placid evolutionary advance. Only with such a fighting perspective can we build, on the domestic field, the anti-monopoly coalition, or be a factor in fighting, on the international scale, for the peaceful coexistence of all nations. Only thus, too, can we think realistically of the American road to socialism.

7. *Strengthen the Party's internationalism*: The CPUSA must, of course, base its policies upon specific American conditions and upon the class and national interests of the working class, the Negro people, and other democratic strata who form the great majority of the American people. This, however, in no way conflicts with the Party's need to carry on a vigorous international

struggle for such overriding interests as peaceful coexistence of all nations, world socialism, and other issues. The true national and international interests of the people are harmonious, not contradictory. Our Party—an American party—independent, and Leninist—must cooperate freely with all other Communist parties.

A marked phase of our Party's present crisis is a serious weakening of its proletarian internationalism. This is partly an "over-correction" of errors made in this sphere during the Stalin regime, but mostly because of the pressure of the very sharp imperialist influences upon the Party. This weakness manifests itself, among other tendencies, by an underestimation of the war danger and of the aggressive role of American imperialism, by virtually ignoring the general crisis of world capitalism, by a certain acceptance of the bourgeois theory of American exceptionalism, by sniping at the Soviet Union, by cultivating a pro-Tito orientation, by scorn for the opinions of foreign comrades regarding our Party's policies, etc. Such incorrect ideas, freely expressed, have done grave damage to our press and also the Party, by isolating us from the American workers and from the world Communist forces.

Our worst mistake in this general respect was in connection with Po-

land and Hungary. Here we tended to put the national question of political independence ahead of the higher questions of world peace and socialism. While criticism of the Hungarian and Soviet Communists for previous mistakes was undoubtedly in order, our press greatly overdid the matter. The National Committee also misunderstood the grave danger of war and to socialism that had been provoked by American imperialism in this crucial situation. This wrong line was especially expressed by the National Committee Resolution of November 20, in which, overlooking the "grim necessity" of the situation, it took the impossible position of neither justifying nor condemning the Soviet military occupation of that country. This was an impermissible yielding before aggressive American imperialism.

To re-strengthen the proletarian internationalism of our Party stands as a major task for this convention. Especially we must revamp the National Committee position on Hungary, recognizing that under the existing dangerous circumstances the military and political actions taken by the Soviet Union in helping to defend Hungarian socialism against the acute threat of fascism and war was imperative.

8. *The Convention must establish Party unity:* For almost a year now our Party has been stirred by an intense discussion. On the whole much

good has come from this, but there has also been the danger of a split. Now the Party is demanding that unity be established and the Party get to work among the masses. This convention, therefore, should put the matter of Party unity to the forefront in all its work and strive for this unity around a Marxist-Leninist program.

Party unity can be achieved only upon a sound political basis. It cannot be won by bridging over disputed questions, as has been tried by the National Committee on recent occasions. I refer particularly to the impossible straddle our Party made on the vital question of Hungary, in which we neither condoned nor condemned the Soviet military occupation of that country in November. Of the same type of straddle is the proposal, contained in Amendment III on "Name and Form," which would have us take the disastrous step of not voting in this convention upon the political action association. In the same category are the placing in the main resolution of incorrect "unity" formulations of Marxism-Leninism and the statement that the political action association is not liquidationist. These straddles, however well-intentioned, in no way promote Party unity, but instead conciliate the Right tendency in the Party. Such wrong formulations should be corrected by the convention.

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

67

In its work to establish Party unity, the convention should seize upon the key link in the chain. This it can do by promptly taking a decisive vote upon the political action association. It would be a tragic mistake to bypass such a vote. As I have mentioned earlier, the New York State convention hit precisely the right note in this respect. Its unity resolution reads as follows, and I move that it be adopted:

*“Resolved, that this convention affirms the continuation of the Communist Party of the United States and opposes its replacement by a political action association; and be it further*

*“Resolved, that this decision does not foreclose further exploration and discussion as organized by the incoming National Committee.”*

By thus fully re-affirming the basis of the Party and by removing the political action association as a matter of factional controversy, a fundamental groundwork would be laid for developing Party unity. This would not settle all questions in dispute, but it would provide a far more favorable basis for their objective consideration. The convention would do well to adopt the New York unity resolution at the outset of its proceedings and thus strike a decisive blow for Party unity, the effects of which would be cumulative all through the convention.

In conclusion, let me re-emphasize that objective conditions are growing more and more favorable for our Party. New possibilities for struggle are opening up. A deep-going stir is taking place in the broad ranks of the trade-union movement and the Negro people, displaying a magnificent spirit of struggle, are the vanguard of the democratic masses. Internationally, the forces of socialism, learning the hard lessons of the Stalin revelations, are girding themselves for a new push forward towards world socialism, while the forces of bankrupt world capitalism are experiencing one defeat after the other.

In this vast field of struggle our Party has a vital role to play. Our convention, by establishing Party unity around a sound Marxist-Leninist program and leadership, can overcome the crisis that has been crippling the Party. We need a will to unity. If we will rise to the importance of our Party tasks in the spirit of the many lessons we have learned during our long and rich Party discussion, we will be surprised at the speed with which our Party can improve its legal position, strengthen its ranks, break its isolation, and again become a real factor in the growing struggles of the working class, the Negro people, and all the democratic forces in this country. (Applause.)

[Convention continues work in committees.]

MORNING SESSION

February 10, 1957

*Dorothy Healey (California) in the Chair.*

*Ben Davis:* It is my privilege to read to you greetings to the wives and families of those who are now in prison. In doing so, I wish to preface the greetings with the following remarks: First I consider this a very important moment in our Party's convention and I am sure we all would regard it with fundamental, touching and human importance apart from its great political importance that we should.

One of the most heroic chapters of our Party's life is the way it stood like an oak against the storms of McCarthyism, war hysteria and persecutions of the last few years. No greater symbol of this heroism exists than the list of our comrades who are Smith Act victims now in prison. The names of our Communist leaders who now have numbers are: Bob Thompson, Henry Winston, Gus Hall, Gil Green, Alex Bittelman, V. J. Jerome, Louis Weinstock, Pettis Perry, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Irving Potash, Arnold Johnson. Nor will we forget Comrades Claudia Jones and John Williamson who were ruthlessly torn from our midst and from their homes.

We greet the wives of these leaders, their sons and daughters and loved ones. We greet each and every one of our comrades and co-workers who are in prison through their loved ones. Let me extend this National Convention's deepest appreciation to each of the wives for their staunchness, their courage, their initiative and their leadership. Let us congratulate them for serving as father and mother to their families, their children, under great handicaps and despite painful

suffering, frequently not basically or sufficiently understood by our Party and by us individually. Most of the wives have become leaders in their own right. They have worked imaginatively, broadly, effectively bringing to the aid of their husbands forces and voices never before raised in our country in behalf of so noble a cause.

They have demonstrated that there is no facet of life and struggle that will not yield its mysteries to the advanced theory of Marxism-Leninism. The pity of it is that too often they have worked alone. How many of us can say that we have planned and fought for the freedom of our Smith Act comrades as Communists should? If we haven't it can only mean that we have not basically understood this question and its far-reaching significance. In this respect the wives have set our whole Party an example. We cannot heed this example until we wage a pitiless struggle against bureaucracy, until we restore to its rightful place in our Party that human warmth which is the essence of Marxism-Leninism and which is one of the finest traits of our proud people, the American people. No Communist Party is worth its salt if it does not fight for its own leaders.

The central challenge before us is the case of Bob Thompson. He first miraculously escaped death when his skull was broken by a fascist-minded criminal whose mind was crazed by the war hysteria of the sanctimonious "peace-lovers" in Washington. Twice since he has undergone operations under prison conditions, either one of which could have meant his life. Despite everything, he is now recovering. We must free Bob Thompson. We can free Bob Thompson. With the know-how of our comrades, were our Party in its full fighting trim, we could do so in association with others almost by a snap of the finger.

We can do so now, if we cut through the fog of timidity, of self-flagellation and downheartedness that tends to sap our self-confidence. We have played a major role in freeing frame-up victims when there was no world socialist system, when Asia and Africa were much more quiet,

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

69

and can we not do so today when the growth of socialist ideas in the world is one of the main reasons that compels the capitalist press in our own country to hang on to every word of our convention? We can. We need the understanding and we need the will. We are in this Convention forging the policies and sharpening our skills and our political weapons.

These men are Smith Act prisoners by the will of reaction and its Washington government. We shall hold the government responsible, that means Eisenhower and his billion-dollar Cabinet, for their safety and their welfare.

To you, the wives, you are American patriots, devoted mothers, and among the finest of American womanhood. In fighting for the freedom of your husbands and loved ones, you are contributing to the peace and democratic progress of our entire nation. You are upholding the Bill of Rights. We love you and we are proud of you. This Convention stands solidly with you and pledges that we shall renew our determination for the fight for the immediate freedom of your loved ones in prison.

Now, comrades, I propose that we adopt the following greetings:

"Dear Comrades, the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. greets you. We express to you our profound comradely regrets that our comrades are, through imprisonment, absent from this historic gathering. To you, whose loved ones are in prison, we in this Convention treasure the hope for their speedy release. We pledge that every effort shall be made to achieve this end. The democratic spirit of the American people is not dead. It is rising. Once again we will clasp hands with those who because of their love of the people, their love of truth and justice and peace, and their hatred of man's oppression of his fellow man, were arbitrarily thrust behind prison bars.

"The cause of the people moves forward. Its triumph is inevitable. We salute you.

Comradely,  
16th National Convention  
of the Communist Party."

[Applause.]

*Chairman:* It has been moved and seconded to adopt this greeting. [Vote taken.] Adopted. In the same sense we recommend for your consideration the following message of greeting to a number of our comrades who have been deported from our country and our labor movement:

"Dear comrades, the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party sends you from afar its warmest comradely greetings. Your splendid contribution to our Party's activities have not been forgotten. Never were they more sorely needed than at this hour when we are confronted with the most varied and perplexing problems, and our deliberations will be poorer because of your absence. We pledge you who for reasons beyond control were forced to leave near and dear friends and relatives, we will conduct a ceaseless fight for your return. We remain fast in our opposition to deportations such as yours. And we are unalterably opposed to the dissolution of families by government edict. We believe that deportation based upon political dissent does violence to the spirit and letter of the Constitution of our country.

"We are sure that those among whom you now live and work are the richer for it and that you are advancing the interest of the people, defending the conception of co-existence in the interests of peace. Through you we send greetings to the people in whose midst you have found a haven. Tell them we stand for the defense of peace in the interest of the peoples of the world.

"Until we meet again, we are

Comradely yours,

16th National Convention  
of the Communist Party."

[Motion carried unanimously to transmit these greetings.]

*Ch.:* In addition, Comrade Ed Strong, one of the leading national comrades of our Party, distinguished Negro leader of our Party, is in the hospital. It is proposed that this convention send greetings to Comrade Strong, with warmest wishes for his immediate, speedy recovery. [Motion is carried.]

*Ch.*: The next thing on the agenda that we voted for yesterday is the report of the Sub-committee of the Constitution Committee on Name and Form. I recognize Oleta O'Connor Yates.

*Oleta O'Connor Yates (California)*: Comrade Chairman and Comrades: In reporting for the Sub-committee of the Constitution Committee on Name and Form, there are first a few remarks to be made on behalf of the Committee.

As to the composition of this committee, it was representative of several states and districts, including New York, California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania and Illinois. The committee likewise contained exponents of varying viewpoints on the question of name and form, including those positions that have been so strongly marked in New York State in particular. The Chairman of the Committee was Oleta Yates of California, the co-secretaries of the committee, Charles Loman of New York, Sam Coleman of New York. The Sub-committee which was delegated to prepare the recommendations for the convention, after discussion in the full committee, contained the following people: Pat Toohey, Charles Loman and Oleta Yates. The recommendations which this committee will present to the convention were voted unanimously by

the entire membership of the committee.

As to the materials which this committee had before it, there were 24 resolutions from sections or divisions, clubs, individuals and groups of individuals, representing a host of different positions on name and form. There were 3 resolutions from large county organizations, all of which endorsed the National Committee Amendment No. 3, with some minor modifications. There were 11 resolutions from State or District Conventions. These included New York, California, Michigan, New England, Illinois-Indiana, Washington-Oregon, Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware, Montana, Minnesota and Colorado. The content of these 11 resolutions from the state or district conventions may be summarized briefly in the following way.

In the main, these resolutions supported the proposition that this convention affirm the continuation of the Communist Party, without foreclosing discussion on name and form in an atmosphere conducive to the freest exchange of ideas. This was true with respect to the resolutions from New England, Minnesota, California, Washington, New York, Michigan, Eastern Pennsylvania, and Illinois. Not all of these resolutions stressed the same points.

Colorado reported that there were three trends present in its conven-



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

71

tion discussion, giving a vote of those people who wanted to keep the present name and form, those who advocated a change of name and form, and those who took the position that decision should be delayed. Montana expressed itself as opposing both change and any continuation of discussion; Oregon took a similar stand.

None of the resolutions that came from State or District Conventions called for or advocated dissolution of the Party, nor did they advocate making any changes at this time.

Next, with respect to the approach of the sub-committee working on this. Despite differences of opinion that existed in our committee, and a clash of opinion that found expression there, there was give and take by the members of this committee, and the committee as a whole fought in a principled way to find those areas of agreement that would promote the broadest unity of our entire membership. Several members expressed the view that name and form is not a principled question but a secondary one, secondary to the content of our organization. It was felt that it is, in a sense, regrettable that this subject took precedence in much of the discussion over matters of ideology, policy and program, since politics must necessarily precede organization. Organization cannot be deter-

mined in a vacuum, nor can it be settled properly through endless debates which divert from constructive participation in the vital people's movements and activities that are surging around us.

Many members of the committee deplored the polarization of views that arose in some areas, and pointed to examples throughout the country which demonstrate the possibility of airing conflicting views in friendly debate, without recriminations. Some comrades—and for that matter some areas—expressed themselves as believing that the Draft Constitution provides adequate channels for the re-opening of discussion on any question without any further provision. However, it was the predominant view that the way in which the discussion around name and form has unfolded, and the atmosphere surrounding this problem, was such as to require assurances to many comrades in our Party that mere advocacy of change to an association should not be indiscriminately stigmatized. It was felt, too, that the membership has played a constructive role in probing and examining in a new way the many problems connected with the question, and seeking to find a solution that will be a correct one, that such probing and investigation should be welcomed by this convention. It was felt that a variety of views have

come forward in the course of the discussion. Few will dispute that some of them have been liquidationist in character. But many of them have not been, and it would be incorrect to lump them together as one undifferentiated mass.

Finally, it was the view of the committee that at this time the convention should express itself with respect to the necessity of strengthening, consolidating and building the Communist Party for the many tasks that it has in the future.

I will now proceed to read the unanimous recommendation of the sub-committee on name and form.

The Sub-committee on Name and Form recommends unanimously:

(1) That this convention go on record to affirm the continuation of the Communist Party of the United States of America.

(2) That this convention opposes the transformation of the Party to a political or educational association.

(3) That, although we oppose endless debate on this question, it should not close the door to all constructive exploration and discussion of the subject as may be organized by the incoming National Committee.

(4) That we recognize that some ideas that have been brought forward in this discussion are revisionist in character. However, it would be wrong to label all proposals for

change in name and form as revisionist per se.

Comrade Chairman, I move the adoption of the report of the Subcommittee.

*Ch.:* The motion has been made and seconded. There will now be discussion on the motion. I want to remind the convention that there is a five minute time limit on discussion, which was ordered yesterday.

*George Blake Charney (New York):* Comrade Chairman and Comrades: I rise to support this amendment, and to compliment the work of this committee. As the comrades may know, I, and many of us who advocated change in name and form, supported this approach in the December meeting of the National Committee. In that spirit, I co-sponsored with Comrade Ben Davis a resolution along these lines in the New York Convention, for the purpose of unifying the convention and the Party. Comrade Foster, in his comments on this resolution yesterday, failed to take note of the fact that the resolution in effect took issue with those who would foreclose discussion following the convention.

My experience has been, comrades, that the discussion has been quite uneven. Even in New York there are areas where this issue has not been discussed. At any rate, an unreadiness on the part of many who favored change to take action on this question at this time. We have come to the conclusion that to press the issue would make for serious division in our ranks.

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

73

We respect the views of the comrades who have apprehensions about a Political Action Association, though we do not share them, or who argue that, though the question may be important, it's secondary to questions of program and policy, and with the great controversy on these issues, this could not be resolved until we have decided on our program.

At the same time, comrades, in voting for this amendment, I want to make it clear that, while this issue is resolved at this convention, in affirming the continuation of the Party as is, which I unreservedly support, I do not consider that the question is dead, that it can be legislated out of existence without jeopardizing the unity of the Party. Hence, I favor not only the spirit of the resolution, but urge adherence to its letter, that calls for further exploration and discussion in proper fashion as organized by the National Committee.

Secondly, comrades, I reject the charge made from the outset by Comrade Foster and others, that this idea was revisionist or liquidationist, that it represents an abandonment of principle, or that its supporters perhaps belong to the "rogues gallery" of the Marxist movement. There can be no proper discussion in our ranks, no matter how you underline the right of dissent, in such an atmosphere. The right of dissent itself would become a sham.

I venture to say that, if we were to take a referendum, and I do not propose a referendum, approximately 20 per cent of our membership, in New

York at any rate, would support it. To ride these people out as liquidationists—is this the way to contribute to the unity of the Party? Is it a radical idea? Yes—it may be invalid in whole or in part. Time, experience, and our own discussion will resolve that on its merits. My own conviction is that, rather than liquidationist, it would help to break the bonds of our illegality, would contribute in time—as I see it, comrades—to help organize a broader base for the Marxist movement in our country, and help revitalize the movement as a whole.

The main issue is not, and has never been, the question of the Political Action Association. The main issue is the main line of the Draft Resolution. And those who insist that this issue of name and form is the main issue tend to conceal their own stubborn opposition over all of these months to the main direction of the resolution.

These things I must say, comrades, but conclude that, without reservation, I support this amendment because I believe it contributes to the unity of the Party, and would make it possible for us to go forward. (Applause.)

*James Ford (New York):* I am not ready to speak on this now, until something is clarified for me. I'd like to ask an explanation of Point 4 in particular. I want that point explained very carefully. For example, what is exactly meant when we say, "It's wrong to label all proposals revisionist per se"? I'd like to have that definitely explained by the Chairman of the Committee or somebody else—exactly that Point 4.

*Ch.:* Well, I would imagine that the members of the committee are going to be participating in the debate, and inasmuch as that question will be in the gen-

eral content of discussion, with Comrade Ford's agreement, I would urge that it be handled within the framework of the debate and discussion on the motion itself this morning.

I would now like to ask for those who are going to speak for and against the motion, so that the Chair can have some indication of the line-up.

I will recognize you as you are lined at the microphone. I would suggest that you comrades get to a mike. Comrade Alan Max is first in line.

*Alan Max (New York):* I grabbed the mike so fast because I spent three days unsuccessfully at our State Convention and never got the floor, but I'd be glad to yield it to some of the comrades from out of town, if some of them want to speak, because Comrade George Charney has spoken for New York. I will get it then later.

*Ch.:* The Chair can't guarantee that.

*Max:* Contrary to some of the thinking in our own ranks, and particularly in newspaper accounts of what was going on in the Party, I think from the very beginning it has been untrue that there are three main directions in our Party, each of them symbolized by one of the leaders of the National Committee. I think that, far from there being three, there are thousands of differences of opinion on thousands of questions, but actually there are two main directions and have been two main directions, since the very outset of this discussion, and these two directions were given to us yesterday in the addresses that we heard.

One of these directions, from the very beginning, has been against the fundamentals that were put forward with all their weaknesses, hesitations,

inconsistencies, perhaps, in the Draft Resolution. And this is in opposition to the Draft Resolution, although it was not always treated that way; it was very often cloaked under a guise of charging everybody else with revisionism, liquidationism, anti-Sovietism, anti-socialism, plots in the *Daily Worker* and in New York State, and particularly used the question of name and form as the worst symbol of everything that was unmentionable.

And the other direction was the direction embodied in the Draft Resolution, trying to solve the crisis within our Party. And in that direction are included differences of opinion on almost every question by almost every one of us, including on major questions such as Hungary and so on. But nevertheless, all of us who share this general direction have the opportunity to determine to carry out through discussion whatever differences there are, and can do that successfully so long as we reject the attempts to stop discussion, attempts to brand ideas, in a way which is thoroughly unjustified and unwarranted.

It seems to me that the two main directions were very well dramatized in the contradicting remarks with regard to the fraternal and welcome message of Jacques Duclos. In one address, we were urged to accept the opinions given by Jacques Duclos; in the other, from Gene Dennis, that we firmly but fraternally reject the criticism—the main criticism—of the Draft Resolution. And I say, comrades, that that section of Comrade Gene's report is a landmark in the history of our

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

75

Party. Not only did it show the difference between 1945 and 1957, but it was the first time that anything like that has happened in the entire history of our Party.

Finally, I would say that this convention, in my opinion, is going to reject the opposition, in whatever form, to the Draft Resolution, and reject what I consider taking a road to nowhere and getting there fast. And secondly, in my opinion, to indicate and dramatize, not only before the Party but before the working class as a whole, that this is an independent Party, independent because that is the only way that we can understand and help play our part among the American people, and it is the only way that we will be able to move the American working class to a position of real international working-class solidarity. And third, and finally, what this convention is going to do, and is doing, is opening up and legitimizing all serious, honest, conscientious forms of thought and exploration on all the questions which we can only begin to touch on at this convention, but which all of us unitedly, if we have this object in view, will do in the coming months and years. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* May I urge the delegates to limit their remarks to the subject under debate? I hesitate to interrupt a speaker at the mike, but please remember the subject matter of the debate, and confine your remarks to that question.

*Betty:* I rise in favor of the proposal of the Resolutions Committee because I feel it most clearly reflects the will

of our membership. I think all of us delegates here have not only welcomed the constructive proposals of our membership, but recognize the fact that our membership added the note of sobriety to our discussion that saved our organization.

Our membership wanted to settle the question of affirming that our Party continue to exist because our membership wanted to get down to work and resolve the fundamental questions that are facing our Party. Our membership felt that, in settling this question, we then had an opportunity to test what we are discussing among the masses, and not in corridors. Our membership spoke unequivocally also on the fact that we must not preclude discussion on any question. No Communist Party can fulfill its role if it puts a period on any question. We are living in a changing, dynamic world, and we must, therefore, guarantee that we will always, with an open mind, look at all questions again, and resolve them in the interests of the cause for which we stand.

But we Communist delegates here have to ask ourselves the question: why did our membership oppose the Political Action Association?

What the membership sensed and some of us didn't sense is that there are liquidationist ideas in the proposal, in the very character of the proposal, and we did not address ourselves to them. I'd like to list a few of those that I considered had liquidationist ideas, whether that was the idea of the exponent or not. But the membership sensed it. First of all, I think

those who said that we need a change in name and form because our Party is discredited, because of the many errors that it made, had—whether they liked it or not—an inclination in that direction, because they accepted the judgment of the enemy, and the temporary influence of the enemy among the mass of the people, without a fight to re-establish the honor of our Party.

The second idea that I feel is liquidationist, is that the only task our Party has is to build the united socialist movement. I am for a mass party of socialism, but I'll be darned if that's all the task of the Communist Party! Or that we can ever build a united socialist movement, if that's all we're going to do! We're going to build a mass party of socialism only when we win the workers for that cause, and that means identifying ourselves and working with the people now on the things they want, and showing that we understand their aspirations and their interests.

The third idea is that the Party has no distinct role to play. We've got an advanced labor movement, an advanced Negro people's movement, an advanced farmers' movement, an advanced everything—what the devil do we need Communism? And we so undermined the morale and confidence of our Party that we did not see that you cannot realize the strategic aim of our resolution—for an anti-monopoly coalition—without the Communist Party being in and among the workers, let alone socialism, without the Communist Party being in on it.

There are many more of this char-

acter. The membership sensed it, rejected it, and that's why—in my opinion, comrades—I think it is wrong (maybe I shouldn't use "wrong" and be a little bit more humble) for comrades to say that they withdraw this proposal, because the membership is not ready for it. I would rather say, "Thank God for the membership; they approve what they wanted, and not us!" (Applause.)

*Helen (Illinois)*: Comrade Chairman, Comrades: I want to read the action of the Illinois convention. It's brief, and I'll just read it straight through, so that you can get the sense of what we did.

"1. This convention goes on record as opposed to change in name or form, that we re-affirm that the organization remain the CPUSA.

"2. This convention is opposed to the formation of a Communist Political or Educational Association to replace or to reorganize the Communist Party.

"3. We are opposed to endless debate on this question of name and form. It is our desire that the National Convention take a clear-cut position on the matter of form and name, as expressed in the near unanimous vote on motions 1 and 2 at this state convention.

"This does not foreclose future examination or discussion of the matter at any level of the Party. We recognize that, based on the constitution, the proper Party body shall have the right to consider the matter, just as they can consider any other matter."

I want to say that, as I understand the motion that is before us, it is vague

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

77

and it leaves the thing open for continued wrangling, for continued discussion, for continued division and factionalism. The fact that, in the State of New York, we have a situation where I come in from out of town, and I'm thrown into the middle of it—to the place where people aren't speaking to each other and that sort of thing—now we aren't at that stage in Chicago, I think because we're more removed from the problem. That's my opinion.

Now, I think we have to foreclose this business of endless discussion; that's the point that I'm making, and I think it should come through the regular channels, so I'm not making a motion to alter this, but I do hope that somebody does, so that we get a referring to the proper bodies, to the constitution, and go through regular procedures, as our state convention voted. (Applause.)

*George (New Jersey)*: Comrades, I don't want to get into this big political question. I'm a county organizer, responsible for maintaining the Party organization, and I want to say that, for five years, we maintained our Party organization. As a matter of fact, in spite of all the problems that we had, I think we gained a little bit until this year. This year I come to this convention with a loss of 20 per cent of our membership. And the problem, as I see it, is how are we going to build and hold what we have.

I'm in favor of the proposals of the sub-committee because I believe that these proposals make it most possible for me to go back to the indus-

trial area where I'm working, to discuss with my membership this problem, to take it into the re-convened county convention, to utilize this resolution in order to bring back into the Party those people who are dissatisfied and have left, and to draw into our Party some other people on the fringe, who will see a possibility in this change, and in this kind of an approach, for discussing in the Party many of the problems that they feel they have not been allowed to discuss in the past.

This practical approach for me means that I have a chance to hold our membership in Mercer County, where I come from, to draw them into activity, and in the activity, to find out what mistakes still need to be corrected, to make whatever changes we need to make, and to build and consolidate our Party as it was the intention of our county convention, and as I am sure is the intention of this National Convention.

*George Morris (New York)*: Comrades, I'd like to support the proposal. I think it's a good proposal. I agree with it. I do not agree with it for any maneuvering purposes, but because I really feel that all of its four points are justified, and should be supported on that ground.

I support it, first of all, because it's a proposal to maintain Party unity, and that's a very important idea, because, if we don't have Party unity, and if we are so weakened as to be confined to a much smaller organization, and perhaps a sect, the question of name and form won't count very much, anyway. So the problem is one of pre-

serving the Party, preserving its unity.

I think the proposal also reflects the overwhelming decision of the comrades in all the districts. And I think it also rejects such proposals as have been made of revisionist character, and some have. It categorically rejects the idea of an association.

Now I think Comrade Foster's speech is very disappointing, in relation to the question of name and form. He conceded, in his speech, that basically there was agreement on the issue, and yet, after conceding that there was agreement, conceding even that there was agreement on the general line of the Draft Resolution, he proceeded with a very factional speech, the kind of speech that has been feeding some of the extreme Right opportunists in our movement. I think it is this polarization between this extreme on one side and the extreme on the other side that has caused this intense factional situation we have in our movement, and which is so appalling to the comrades outside of New York, because New York has had the worst of this disease.

Now I think, comrades, that this motion before us—the basic motion before this convention, I think, despite what comrades say—I think that that spells unity. It spells basic agreement from which we can proceed. And I think, by voting for this motion, we at the same time reject very decidedly this concept of factionalism, that we place the emphasis on the need for maximum agreement, maximum unity, from which we can go forward, and I think that Comrade Dennis, speaking

on this question yesterday, gave us the right tone. And it was all the more deplorable to listen to the kind of speech on this question that we had from Comrade Foster later on, in face of the basis that was laid for unity by Comrade Dennis.

So, in conclusion, comrades, I say that we should give this proposal very emphatic and I hope unanimous support here, in order to indicate the will of the membership, in order to once and for all put an end to all this maneuvering and speculation that has been going on on the future of the Party. (Applause.)

*Martha Stone (New Jersey)*: Comrades, the New Jersey State Convention of the Party voted overwhelmingly to accept the national amendment on the question of name and form. In our ranks in the Party, this amendment was greeted at that time because we felt that this corresponded to the feeling within our leadership and within our membership on this question. Many of us felt we needed more time to hammer out things. In our district, some of us in the leadership were for change of name and form. I, for example, was inclined in relation to change of name. And we found that sectors of the Party that were pushing in the direction of basic changes they felt were required, nonetheless were not ready to be stampeded for settlement of this question. When the national amendment came out, it corresponded to what the Party desired in our district, and that is why the comrades were glad to see that this question was removed as an issue, and that at a subse-



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

79

quent time, corresponding to further solutions of program, we would arrive at further clarification.

Now I consider the proposal of this sub-committee not only a continuation in that spirit, but I think it adds something with which I wholeheartedly agree. It adds a note that differentiates between Party comrades at whatever level that may have been searching for new answers in a new way and were probing and giving serious arguments for change of name and form as distinct from those who had many concepts that would have led to the liquidation of a Communist Party that, regardless of what its name or form, has to have a Marxist character, has to have a character in which it gives leadership to the day to day struggle, and is not just some debating society.

I cannot speak on this question without stating what I think to be the facts in the National Committee of the Party, and the National Board and I have been invited to a number of meetings, and attended all of the meetings of the National Committee where this question was debated. In neither place have I found comrades that were discussing any question of name and form ever putting it forth from a revisionist standpoint, or from a standpoint that would make our Party some little sewing circle or debating society. Furthermore, it never was an issue in the National Committee of the Party. It never was a major issue within the National Board of our Party. There were mixed opinions, just as we found in the Party as a whole. And, in fact, when the Draft Resolu-

tion was adopted by the National Committee, at that time this question was even left open because nobody felt like getting in and discussing it. People did not have their ideas fixed, and they said, "Let's take this to the Party, and let the Party talk about it, and we, together with the membership of the Party, will enter into discussion."

And I think that the characterization that the source of revisionism in respect to this proposal stems from the National Committee, or the National Board—that is not borne out by the facts. Furthermore, it seems to me that we have learned one thing in this discussion, that when we are making a turn, and that when there are new questions to be tackled, we must learn from the past, and from 1945, and the entire thirty years of our history. We must learn how, when we make a turn, to see that we do not swing to the Left or to the Right. And we must also learn to tolerate each other's views.

I end with the point that it seems to me we must fight for an atmosphere which permits the cadre of our Party to discuss this free of label, to discuss this when there is an organized discussion in the Party for proper settlement of the issue. (Applause.)

*Charles Loman (New York)*: Comrades, as secretary of the committee on this resolution, I support it, and am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this convention, which I believe will finally help to unite our Party, and put an end to this debate, which has been tearing our Party to pieces in New York.

Now, I hope the out of town comrades will bear with me, because for a solid year, we have been saturated with this discussion of Party versus Association in the New York State Board, and those who have been minorities in their districts understand, as I have certainly learned and feel, that the right of dissent will always be fought for by all members of our Party who recognize the need to express differences in points of view. For I have been a minority of one for a year in our State Board—basically because I was for the Party—and the ideas of association were wrecking our Party throughout the state.

Now I gather, comrades, that on the question of labeling and name-calling, we all want to discuss things in a comradely atmosphere. That's the only way we are going to resolve differences. However, there are certain propositions which are what they are. When a patient has smallpox, the disease is labeled smallpox, not the patient. Malaria is labeled malaria—not the patient, but the disease. There are ideas, as I understand it from Marxist-Leninist terminology, that have to be called what they are, and I want to recite to you a number of ideas which have frightened the membership of our Party, and based upon the struggle against these ideas, they rose up to see that the association was being pushed and nurtured by certain ideas which helped to further split the Party, and would lead us down the path to revisionism.

Now, one: Marxism-Leninism in theory and organization helped to bring

about socialism—true, but only in backward countries—Russia, China, Eastern Europe, other colonial countries, etc. It is not suited to Western capitalist countries—England, France, the U.S.A., etc. That is, Marxism-Leninism is not a universal science. We therefore need a new science which we must develop, we need a Western socialism as against an Eastern socialism.

Further: socialism does not really exist anywhere in the world. We have been taken in by false pronouncements from the so-called socialist countries, and this, of course, coupled with anti-Soviet attacks, etc., etc. A new feature of the period today is that Communists are killing Communists.

*A Delegate:* Point of Order: It is my opinion that the last remarks are completely out of order, as was ruled by the Chair, as far as the type of discussion we are to have.

*Ch.:* The Chair will request the speaker to limit his remarks solely to the questions of name and form.

*Loman:* Well, name and form, comrades, are part of this discussion, in that point four on revisionism. I'm discussing revisionist ideas, not personalities. I have the right to speak on it. (Applause.)

The Soviet troops in Hungary are equated to troops of imperialist powers, dominating oppressed nations, thus advocating the bourgeois propaganda of "red imperialism." Doubts expressed that an economic crisis is any longer inevitable, because capitalism has now learned how to smooth out the economic cycles. Thus we, after achieving

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

81

an anti-monopoly coalition, can reform gradually into socialism.

Six. I want an association so that I can stand up in my mass organization and truthfully say that I am not a member of the Communist Party. Further, the Negro question in the U.S. today is predominantly and mainly a moral question. We only have to persuade our united front force friends, etc., etc., and we can then support, etc. It's not an economic question based upon imperialist oppression. Negroes come into the Party with more nationalism than white comrades with white chauvinism. There is no white chauvinism in the Party, only mild racial prejudices—therefore, we should drop the word chauvinism.

Labor can eventually take over the Democratic Party, and transform it into a people's party. Our Party never had the opportunity to make a Right opportunist error, let alone veer to the Right, etc.

Now, comrades, I could go on with more. These are ideas which were leading comrades to drop out of the Party. These were ideas utilized to nurture the association—and I'm not saying that everybody who was for an association, as the amendment says, were revisionists, or had these ideas. But, in our New York organization—and I'm quoting the thoughts of Party leaders in New York State, and I can give names, places and times, but we don't want that. (Voices: "Yes, we want that!" and "No!")

Now, I want to conclude. And it's this that's the body of revisionism, and a deviation from Marxism-Lenin-

ism that frightened me, and that the only thing I knew that the membership would oppose this and defeat it that enabled me to stand in that State Board and fight for a solid year, comrades—a solid year, against every kind of oppressive maneuver and tactic that would box us out of the Party. Now I want to conclude on this—just two points in relation to this. Now, I'm happy that Comrade Blake is joining in support of this resolution, because I helped to draft it, along with the other comrades. And on that, we can unite around the Party. But there are other political questions which still have to be resolved, around which there is not unity, but which can be resolved within the framework of the Party, and when this convention helps to resolve that, that will be the basis around organized channels of discussion.

*Ch.:* I want to call the attention of the convention to a problem which this convention jointly faces. Yesterday, we voted to allot one hour to this discussion. The hour is now up. Comrade John Gates has asked for the floor; Comrade Bernie from the sub-committee on this question has asked for the floor; Comrade Ben Davis has asked for the floor—(Voice: And I'm asking for the floor)—and you can see the line-up at the mikes of comrades who have also asked to speak. It is obvious that, in order to carry through the activity of this convention, and the time allotment on it, the Chair will have to be guided by a motion from the floor on the question of the further procedure.

*Morris (New York):* Point of Personal Privilege: The last speaker stated that, for the past year, he was a minority of one in the discussion in the New York State Board on the question of the political association. As a matter of fact, I am a member of the New York

State Board; Comrade Si Gerson is a member of the New York State Board, and neither Comrade Si nor I voted for the establishment of a political association. We both voted against it.

The point is that Comrade Charles, in his remarks, stated that the entire New York State Board voted one way.

*Ch.*: All right, comrade, your point has been made.

*A Delegate*: On procedure: I'd like to move that we allow Comrade Gates his five minutes, and close the discussion.

[After considerable procedural debate, the motion was carried with the amendment of one additional speaker against the report.]

*John Gates*: Comrades, I wish to support the motion of the committee. In saying this, I wish also to state that I continue to advocate my views. In fact, everything including the discussion at this convention has convinced me all the more that the transformation of our Party into a political action association is necessary and desirable in the best interests of our Party. But I support this motion because I consider it necessary to subordinate my views to the need for unity in our Party. The need for unity arises because there are some comrades in our Party who favor the continuation of our Party in its present name and form and there are other comrades who oppose it. And we are trying to unite those comrades who both advocate and oppose these ideas.

What is the essence of this motion? In my opinion it has been one of the most harmful things in our Party discussion of the past year and the discussion within this convention that we have divided our Party into comrades who are for the Party and comrades who are against the Party. I believe

that all of us are for the Party. I believe that it is arrogant and conceited on the part of some comrades to set themselves up as the self-appointed saviors of the Party and that they are to be considered Party patriots, while others who oppose their views are to be considered enemies of the Party.

All of us want to save the Party. Some of us have different points of view as to the best way to save our Party. Let me remind you comrades that after we dispose of this the chief problem that concerns our Party will remain the chief problem—and that is the isolation of our Party which has been the main issue in this discussion.

We will still be isolated when this convention is over no matter what we do on this question. It remains to be seen what we will do after the convention to overcome our isolation. We saved our Party in 1945 when we reconstituted our Party and some comrades thought that's all that had to be done.

But we reconstituted our Party in 1945, and look where we are now! So it is not so simple, comrades, that all you have to do is retain the name and form of the Communist Party, and that solves all of our problems.

It is my view, which is shared by many comrades in the Party, that life and reality will determine this question. I believe we will come to see, as time goes on, that it will be necessary to make changes in the name and in the structure—the form—of our Party. And I think it flows out of the policies we will adopt at this convention, the policies I am confident we will adopt.

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

83

I have never been one who has said that this question is the main question before the Party. I have always said that we should subordinate it to policy. And I still believe that. But it is just from this point of view that I wrote about and advocated a change in the name and form of the Party. In my article which you read in the November issue of *Political Affairs*, the overwhelming bulk of that article is devoted to the policy and program of our Party, and only a small part of it was on the question of change in name and form, which in my opinion was a logical continuation of what I thought were correct policies for our Party.

I think, in connection with what is the main aim of our Party in the coming historical period—helping to build an anti-monopoly coalition in our country—given the level of development of the labor movement in our country and the people's movement and the necessity to bring about a political realignment along these lines, we have to consider the existence of our Party as to how best to function, how best to assist this new political realignment. It is my opinion that this can best be done by a change of name and form.

Now, to conclude, it is all right to say, as many comrades have said, that discussion on this issue will not be foreclosed. Comrades, given the understanding of some of the comrades who present this question here at this convention, it would be a brave soul indeed who would dare to discuss this question after the convention. If one is to be branded a revisionist, a liquidationist,

and all of the names under the sun because you advocate these things, how can we have a proper discussion in the Party on this question? It is just because of this kind of atmosphere that we have not had a proper discussion up until now on this question! (Applause.)

*Ch.:* We now have one comrade speaking against the motion.

*Bill S. (New York):* I think the question of liquidation has been answered by the previous speaker. He deplors the fact that there hasn't been sufficient discussion. Yet there was a majority in the State Board who had adequate time to hand down literature to the county, to the districts, and what have you, for us to have a discussion on it. We didn't have a discussion on it out in the streets, and we could have no discussion because, if we upheld it, we couldn't even have meetings—we couldn't even have meetings. And the reason that we had meetings is because we walked the streets and got the people together. Because we weren't getting any direction. That's why we're here. I've never been to a National Convention before as a delegate in my life, and it's only because the rank and file sent me here. (Applause.)

We have Communist Parties all over the world that call themselves something else, but that form is the main thing, and when you start to fooling with the form, then you fool with the content. You just can't have one type of building and form it into the form of another. It's basic.

And I am independent—sure, I'm in-

dependent! I'm just as independent as other Negro people, who have been stepped on, from the physician to the lowest worker, because when he's stepped on, he's coming right down with me. And all other workers. I don't consider any worker, because he's got a higher job than I, any less than I. I'm for the amendment that says—that we have a Party.

Now, comrades from out of the state, the Party isn't my responsibility, or the State's responsibility. It's your responsibility. And if you don't want a change in name or form, you have a right to say so. I don't think New York State has any right to say anything about it. I'm from the South, too, and I'm fighting for my people down there, as well as for anybody up here. I hold that to be true. And not only that, but people all over the world, because it don't have any boundaries and is not independent, even if we profess to be.

I am against the question of continuing debate on the question of name and form. (Applause.)

*Archie (California)*: I offer an amendment to the first point to include the words: "Our chief task is to rebuild and strengthen the Communist Party."

*Oleta Yates*: Unless some member of the committee takes issue with this, I would say that, based on the discussion in the committee last night, Archie's amendment to include the statement for building, consolidation and strengthening the Party would be quite in line with the general spirit of the committee discussion.

*Parliamentarian*: On that basis, the amendment is obviously in order under the rules.

*Archie*: Point of order. Are you allowing all amendments to come in now? Is

that right? And then you are going to take up the question of whether to close debate or not?

*Parliamentarian*: First there's a general principle that's involved here. The highest authority in the Communist Party of the United States is the National Convention, and it's assembled here.

Secondly, within that highest authority, the highest authority is the general meeting of the delegates. That's now assembled here. Whatever you decide goes, including the living up to the rules you yourselves have adopted. And one rule, known as Rule No. 8, which you can all look up, has a lot of complexities to it that's based on trying to combine the democratic concept that this convention is the highest authority ruling itself with the fact that you are trying to expedite business and prevent a flood of various business being done on the convention floor, rather than being presented through the committees that you have elected.

You have already interpreted Rule 8 by one decision here, and that interpretation, carried by a majority vote in the convention, is that you are not allowing a substitution of the committee report to be made from the floor of the convention. And that's why, in connection with your amendment, I tried to put it within that confine to determine whether it was a substitute or consistent with the main motion before the body, and that will be my ruling from here on out until this convention in its wisdom decides to overrule me, which they have a right to do, including removing me, which I would greatly appreciate. (Laughter.)

*Burt Nelson (Washington)*: I rise in behalf of the Washington delegation, in full support of the committee's recommendation, to offer an amendment of implementation. The amendment is that there be no future action on the question of name or form, except at a convention of our Party. This is action—not talk, discussion.

*Ch.*: I will ask the Chairman of the Sub-committee, in terms of the Sub-committee's own discussion on point 4—only the convention could rule on this question, anyway. The amendment is not necessary. No other body of the Party could rule on this but at a convention, Burt.

*Paul (New York)*: I rise to amend one

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

85

word. In place of the word, "oppose" change of name and form, insert the word "reject."

*Ch.*: The committee does not accept the change, and therefore, under the previous ruling, it would have to go to the sub-committee first for debate.

*A Delegate*: On the third point, I would propose the deletion of the first phrase "although we are opposed to endless debate," and have it read that "we will not close the door on discussion in any body of our Party." (Applause.)

*Ch.*: The same ruling, comrade. I would suggest that we first vote on the report of the committee. Comrades who have additional changes to submit them to the committee.

*Celeste (California)*: Comrade Chairman, I would like to add three words to Comrade Archie's amendment. I have informed him of the thing I wish to add, and the Chair can ask him if he will accept this into his amendment. I would like to add to his formulation, which was "our task is to rebuild and strengthen the Communist Party," the following words: "and to overcome its isolation." (Applause.)

*Ch.*: The chairman of the sub-committee states that this would also be considered within the discussion of that sub-committee, and will accept it as a portion of the first amendment.

Comrades, may I call to your attention just one point, and that is in regard to the exact language of each resolution that is going to be appearing before us, and I think we have all experienced this in our own conventions at home—all of us could probably find different words we would like to insert, but let me urge that we restrain our literary talents, and in some cases, political reactions on some of these questions, in favor of the general political direction that a resolution goes, so that we can proceed to the other resolutions.

We will now proceed to vote, comrades, on the committee's report. First: the motion has been made here to close debate. [Carried.] Secondly, on the motion that was just asked, to vote on the committee's proposals as a body. That is the motion that was made by the chairman of the sub-committee in the report to us.

[Continued lengthy procedural discussion.]

*Ch.*: First, on the amendment of chang-

ing the word "oppose" to "reject."

[Further procedural discussion.]

*Yates*: The point in question is point 2 of the report of the sub-committee. I would add here that this sub-committee, which did reflect the most widely divergent views, agreed on point 2 word for word, and it is as follows: [reads point 2.]

*Ch.*: All in favor of the word "reject" signify by raising your cards. [Vote taken.] The Chair rules that the amendment has lost. We will now proceed to vote on the sub-committee's motion. [Vote taken.] Opposed: 3. Abstentions: 17.

AFTERNOON SESSION

February 10, 1957

*Pat (New Jersey) in the Chair.*

[Additional greetings are read, including greetings from Colombia, Great Britain and Korea.]

*Chairman*: The Chair calls on Sid Stein, for the Resolutions Committee.

*Sid Stein*: Comrade Chairman, Comrades: I have been asked to introduce the work of the Resolutions Committee, and to make some remarks in explanation of the process that this Draft Resolution went through and how it came to be what it is today. What it will be tomorrow, that you will decide.

The original Draft Resolution, issued by the National Committee on September 15th, was the product of the collective efforts of the Party, and not the work of some individuals. It was based on the discussion in the Party, and by the Party mem-

bership, especially on the discussion that took place between April and September.

The resolution that went before the sub-committee last night was already amended on a number of questions. It had a new economic section. It had a post-election political analysis. It had an up-to-date discussion of the international situation. It had a new section on the struggle for Negro rights and Negro-white unity. It had a new section on trade union work. It had a section on social democracy, and three amendments on the Party. These are extensive changes indeed.

What do these changes signify? In our opinion, they signify that our Party has already changed, that there is something new in this Party of ours, that we are having a truly democratic discussion, that we have no longer a one-way street, where the leadership issues documents, and they do not get the full treatment by the membership of the Party, that we have now a two-way street, in which the ideas are flowing both ways. The membership has registered its views before the convention; it will do so through the delegations in the convention, and we all hope that this will become a normal way of life for our Party.

My task here is facilitated by the discussion this morning, and by the overwhelming vote on the name and form proposition. Because, to me—

and I believe to a majority of the Resolutions Committee that worked on this resolution up to the convention, and to the majority of the National Committee, it is quite important that we settle a couple of questions, one of them being our approach to the resolution. There are varying estimates of the resolution and of the discussion, and comrades, it depends on where you start from, what your estimate is as to how you approach it. If one starts from the proposition that what we have here before us is the product of some kind of an unholy alliance between liquidationists, revisionists and conciliators who make up the majority of this National Committee, as against a minority of Marxist-Leninists, then we have one approach to the resolution, we have one approach to Party unity, we have one approach to every question that comes before us. If we take up the position that this resolution represented, as some comrades said earlier in the discussions, conciliation with the Left, and that the resolution doesn't go anywhere, then again we take a certain point of view—a certain point of departure. This National Committee and the Resolutions Committee, on the basis of the policy discussions, have fought these past eight months for a line of action which, in our opinion, neither conciliates the Left nor conciliates the Right, but is trying to establish



SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

87

a basis to make it possible for our Party to rebuild itself, to re-establish its past connections with the people of our country, with the working class and with the Negro people.

What has been the view of the majority of the National Committee? In the very first draft, we stated, in the process of carrying out the main task, which is the struggle against left-sectarianism, the Party must "continue to maintain its vigilance against right-opportunist tendencies, combatting them at all times. This is especially necessary in view of the extremely sharp turn which the Party is now making in many of its basic policies. The necessary struggle against right-opportunist errors must be carried on in such a way as not to weaken the main task."

I submit, comrades, that the vote this morning indicated that the overwhelming majority of the delegates to this convention, like the majority of the Party, wants this kind of an approach. What did the National Committee try to do? Let us ask this question—in what way were the National Committee and the Resolutions Committee conciliatory to the so-called Right? Precisely in the same way that this convention was conciliatory this morning. It refused to drive these comrades out of the Party. It refused to label them revisionists. It said, "We disagree with some of their propositions, but

these comrades have a right to argue for those propositions." The National Committee, in its majority, and the Resolutions Committee, in its majority, have seen these drafts as something to be debated, amended and improved by all Party comrades, those who want an association and those who didn't want an association. Not just by some—by the whole Party. This National Committee was always opposed, in its overwhelming majority, to changing the Party into an association, but it insisted that to brand those comrades who wanted one or another change as liquidationists was wrong and harmful. And the convention this morning said as much.

This National Committee also insisted that it is possible to liquidate the Party even if you don't change its name and form. And that much of it was done in the past ten years. The majority of this National Committee and Resolutions Committee insisted that our Party must base itself on Marxism-Leninism, but it insisted likewise, as the membership is insisting, that the use value of Marxism-Leninism is not enhanced but destroyed and undermined by our past approaches to it—approaches by the leadership, in the first place—of dogmatically latching on to catch phrases which turned our ardor for socialism into adoration of clichés.

The majority of this National

Committee and the Resolutions Committee were also in full agreement with the Party membership and learned much from the Party membership in our insistence that this draft resolution make clear our fight for international working-class solidarity, at the same time making it clear that we must break with our uncritical acceptance and dogmatic application of positions promulgated by Marxists in other lands, which very often—not because they did wrong, but because we did wrong in accepting it in that manner—turns our science, that has the power to help the working class liberate humanity, into a religious tract that imprisons the very Party of the working class, and that builds a wall between us and our mother, the working class, and our brothers, the Negro people, and our natural allies.

I believe there is no growing gap in our Party. I believe the gap is being closed because we are facing up to the issues in this convention. And I believe the gap between the Party of the past and the leadership of the future—the new leadership—is going to be closed, by this two-way street. We will have Party unity. We will have it because our unity will be built upon a mass policy that unites us with our class. There can be no effective Party unity on its own and by itself, away from the working class. Party unity is mean-

ingful, Party unity is solid and lasting if it is not just unity of the Party, but it is unity of the Party with our class and our natural allies.

In closing, comrades, may I suggest that the resolution, together with the discussion, and the amendments, will—by the will of this convention and by your actions—make possible the unity of our Party, and unity between our Party and our class, and will make possible for our Party to give concrete and meaningful expression to one of our most cherished principles, the principle of international working class solidarity.

*Ch.*: The Chair calls on Hy Lumer to report for the Resolutions Sub-committee No. 1.

*Hy Lumer (Ohio)*: Comrade Chairman, Comrades: Our sub-committee is responsible for three sections of the draft resolution. Number one, the section dealing with the economic situation, economic questions; Number two, the fight for peaceful coexistence; three, the section which, in the present draft, is Part 2, "The Path Ahead." We propose to present these three sections individually, with opening remarks on each section by a member of the committee, and discussion on one section at a time, rather than a combined discussion on all of them.

I am to report on the economic section.

Well, there has been much dis-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

89

agreement among us on a host of questions. On one point, there has seemed to be virtual unanimity, and that is, on the inadequacy of the original economic section that appears in the printed draft resolution. Because of this, the pre-Convention Resolutions Committee undertook to re-write the section rather than to attempt to amend the original. The re-written section has been given to all delegates in their kits, and I hope by now the delegates have had a chance to read it. I can gather from the reaction that some haven't.

What the section attempts to do as it stands is as follows: One, to present a brief general evaluation of the postwar American economy, with a characterization of the nature of the postwar boom period; second, on the basis of this, a reiteration of the basic Marxist economic principles by which we have been governed, and a re-statement of the fact that these are not invalidated by the developments of this period. We felt that this was necessary because this has become a major point in the discussion. Third, a presentation briefly of the nature of our economic errors and estimates, and of the roots of these errors. Fourth, a presentation in outline form of the new features of the American economy in the present period, and some specific features of it, whose study we have tended to neglect, and

whose study is a key to the correction of errors and the improvement of our work in this field, and calling for the establishment of a commission by the incoming National Committee to carry out such studies. Finally, the rewritten section presents some elements of an immediate economic program.

We have not attempted in this draft any analysis of the immediate economic situation; we have made no attempt to go into the question of economic perspectives. A number of resolutions and individual comrades felt that the resolution should do so. However, it was omitted for the following reasons. While we believe that such an analysis is necessary, we felt that it would be wrong to attempt any kind of a brief, sketchy statement of a few paragraphs of a superficial character; we felt that it would be wrong to attempt it, also, on the basis of a hasty look at things, that to do so would be merely to repeat some of the mistakes of the past. We feel that this needs to be done, and that this should be one of the major tasks of such a commission as is proposed.

We received some resolutions which stated that an analysis of economic perspectives was necessary in order for us to be able to draw any conclusions as to our work for the future in all phases, and one stating in effect that we could not really have a draft resolution or any kind

of resolution unless we were able to do this. We feel that this is unwarranted, and that such a view should be rejected. This was the only major question raised in resolutions from districts and district conventions on this section. Others called for minor changes of one sort or another, most of which had already been incorporated in the rewriting. In the discussion in the committee, only additional changes were made for minor revisions, and the general line of the resolution was accepted.

*Ch.:* The committee moves the adoption of its report; it is seconded. Any discussion upon this? Is the question called? [Vote taken.] The report of the committee is adopted.

The Chair calls on Comrade Lil Gates for the second section of this sub-committee's report.

*Lil Gates (New York):* Comrades, the committee felt that this is an extremely key section of our draft resolution. In fact, it might well be called the foundation of our draft resolution, vital because it establishes a perspective for the whole period ahead of the kind of world we live in, the direction in which that world and our country are moving, the possibilities that are open in this period—all of which are fundamental to any policy or any other aspects of the work of our Party.

There was a great deal of interest shown in the various state conventions, as we could gather from some

of the resolutions submitted, on the theme of this section, which is—peaceful coexistence and the estimate of the international situation. Many of these resolutions indicated general agreement with the over-all perspectives, while also indicating some questions which needed to be brought up to date, and other questions which needed clarification. There are also certain specific proposals which I'll refer to a little bit later in the course of this report.

The committee felt that the key aspect of this section was to establish the validity of the outlook of fighting for peaceful coexistence, bringing that perspective up to date in line with recent developments. We felt that we should hew pretty closely to establishing clarity on this question, and that whatever changes are recommended should avoid any pitfalls of beclouding or glossing over or weakening this central impetus. The majority of the committee felt that this was extremely important because the root of our errors in the past was particularly the failure to see what was new and arising in the world, the new relationship of forces which had its basis in the defeat of fascism in World War II, the further strengthening of the Soviet Union, the establishment of socialism in China, the growth of a system of socialist states, the new level of the colonial liberation movement, and the rise of the

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

91

peace forces throughout the world, and especially noteworthy, the growth of peace sentiments and the peace aspirations of the American people.

We recognized that it was necessary to clear up legitimate questions which had arisen in the course of the discussion which would make clear that we do not believe that the era of peaceful coexistence has arrived, and been achieved, but that it must be struggled for, that what we have is a new period opening in the history of mankind which requires struggle to guarantee and to achieve. And if we are armed with this two-fold approach, then we will not be caught by surprise; but neither will we equivocate in seeing what is new in this world situation; we will not be without a rudder; we will be able to project, in the most powerful and positive way, the fight for peaceful coexistence, and in this way, overcome a basic weakness in the past policy and outlook of our Party, which was one-sided, and did not see the dialectical development of these new forces on a world scene.

Therefore, the Resolutions Committee had before it some very important amendments, which had been prepared, and which we accepted, which we felt would clarify questions which had arisen, and would clarify these questions in a way which would not weaken, but would strengthen, the fight for peaceful co-

existence. It would answer the questions that some comrades have raised, that in view of the Hungarian events and the Egyptian events, that the concept of peaceful coexistence is not a legitimate one. It would answer the questions of some who said that there were views that considered that peaceful coexistence was already an established fact, and it did not have to be fought for. We feel that these amendments are a very important contribution to the peace question, and therefore we offer them in answer to many other points which were made in some of the statements.

Secondly, we had a number of questions raised about the struggle against United States imperialism, and here, too, we feel that the entire draft resolution was a concrete American form, and the best direction and guidance that could give us a correct policy precisely in the struggle against United States imperialism. We also feel, however, that it was necessary to bring the resolution up to date, to take into account the fact that the Eisenhower administration and certain sectors of U.S. imperialism have attempted to project policies and programs which heighten the war danger and increase tension. I think you will find this aspect of the question dealt with in this amendment.

But we rejected ideas which would once again so hedge in our

position with qualifications that we would be left with uncertainty as to what we believed to be new and possible in this period ahead, and would lead us back into the type of errors which we made which were so fatal to all aspects of our mass work.

Another question which was raised in the committee was the question of a plan of work around concrete aspects of peace activity and specific slogans, and so forth. We thought that this was a valid question, but we did not propose to handle it within the framework of this section of the resolution. We understand that the committee on plan of work will bring in concrete proposals on various aspects of the struggle for peace and specific slogans.

Now we had one particularly difficult question which arose in our committee, and that had to do with the developments in Hungary. It was the opinion of our committee that this was not within the purview of this particular committee. Our job was to deal with the estimate of the relationship of forces on a world scale, and to answer whether or not the concept of peaceful coexistence is a valid and guiding one for us in the period ahead. Of course, as you will see, the resolution says that neither the developments in the Middle East nor the developments in Hungary undermine the validity of that concept, but it was only in this con-

nection that these developments were discussed. There were some controversial sentences—at least one—in the amendment which you have, which I hope you will take out, on the international situation around Hungary, and we proposed, after consultation with the Presiding Committee, that this sentence be referred to the general Resolutions Committee, which will discuss how to deal with the question of Hungary, and that we do not entertain discussion on that issue under this particular point.

Finally, I would also like to say, before I read the specific amendments, there were some differences among the committee which we could not fully resolve around some questions of formulation in the draft resolution. I think Comrade Will will speak for himself on this. But it was the opinion of the committee that, in dealing with the question of Geneva, the draft resolution simply discussed what had transpired there, and we felt that the amendment which I am going to read to you in concluding this report took care of any questions as to how the developments in the last few months related to our estimate of Geneva and the fight for peaceful coexistence.

And we have one other very important amendment which I'll refer to at the conclusion of this amendment, and that was to add a section on the responsibility of the American

people in general, and the American Communists in particular, to strengthen the fight against U.S. imperialist domination of South America and the people of Puerto Rico, and while we don't feel that the section we have drafted is as yet adequate, due to lack of time, we do want to propose that this section be expanded in the final and edited portion in the draft resolution.

And therefore, with this introduction, I will move the adoption of this section of the Resolution with the three amendments that you have before you. I will say, comrades, I cannot help expressing a personal note here, that I hardly know—I can think of few questions more important for this convention than to come out of it with a clear and clarion call that yes, we, the Communists of America, believe in, will fight for, and help to bring about this era of peaceful coexistence and the prevention of another world war, which is possible.

*Will Weinstone (New York)*: I think Comrade Gates has given you a good representation of the proceedings of our committee. We were in agreement on most of the questions. But on two questions there were some differences, as I think the convention ought to know. They are not unimportant questions. One deals with a formulation, but it is not a question of wording, and the second deals with the question of imperialism and the necessity of

amending the resolution on that point.

First, with respect to imperialism. We felt, and Comrades Gates has indicated it, that it is necessary to put in a section in this part of the resolution on the necessity of exposing the reactionary role of American imperialism. I introduced that in the committee on behalf of the New York resolution. The proposal was made in the committee but I did not propose at midnight to try to formulate it. But I would like to propose to the convention that we get in a good, substantial paragraph or two exposing the reactionary role of American imperialism on a world scale in the interests of the struggle for peaceful coexistence.

Comrade Gates did say she feared that, unless we get in a proper kind of statement, it might unbalance it, and create the impression that we are in the pre-Geneva days, and I can well understand her caution on this point. But we can get in a proper statement, which is not the kind that we did in 1948, when we devoted ourselves quite correctly to an exposure of the role of American imperialism. But, you can't fight for peaceful coexistence if you do not know the enemy. It is not enough for us to point out the new; that is absolutely essential. It is also necessary to know that, if you want to impose peaceful coexistence upon American imperialism, then you can do it only if you know the trend and direction that American imperialism is moving in.

The second point, and a matter of formulation, deals with p. 18 of the draft resolution. A motion was made in the committee, and unfortunately

lost by a vote of, I think, eight to six, to strike out in the paragraph beginning "The growing crisis" the last words, that the "Eisenhower administration at Geneva formally renounced the use of force to resolve differences."

I stated in the committee, that the formulation that the Eisenhower administration had renounced the use of force to resolve differences created illusions in the Party. By the action of the resolutions committee in opposing striking out that at Geneva, they formally renounced the use of force to resolve differences, and if we leave it stand, it means, on page 18, they formally renounce, and on page 19, the Eisenhower doctrine is in force.

Now, what is the Eisenhower doctrine? It is the threat of using force in the Middle East. On one page, they renounce, and on the other page, they threaten to use force.

Now, what is the question at issue? It is that there were illusions. Now it is true that the Eisenhower administration at Geneva did state that they did not intend to use force in order to resolve differences—that is true, and the world "formal" means that they formally did it, but did they actually do it? Did we believe, and did we not create the impression by the use of this term "formally," that the Eisenhower administration had given up its policy, representing a threat to the peace? In my opinion, by introducing what was a diplomatic term, we tended to play down the danger of war represented by American imperialism and the administration.

Now, the statement made at Gen-

eva was not without meaning. Even though it was a diplomatic statement, it of course had some effect upon the world, under the pressure of world opinion. It had the effect of lessening tension. And it should have been used, and was used, by the Party in the situation. But I think that by omitting the fact that not only did the administration continue the cold war, but continued also the policy of huge armaments and projects, we tended therefore, not to be prepared for the developments that took place. And I think we must recognize it, and not continue that, by a formulation in this resolution which may still tend to confuse the situation.

I want to say, in conclusion, that it is a mistake for anyone to believe that, because the cold war is being heated up by reaction in the United States, therefore we are back to pre-Geneva, period. I think there are such tendencies in the ranks of our Party, that do not see the main direction and trend of events, but I think, that while we must stress the possibility for co-existence and the draft resolution does it and the amendments do it, we must put the situation clearly before the Party, and that is, if we want to get peaceful coexistence, we must not only recognize the new situation that exists and utilize it, we must recognize that only the people's struggles, and a mass struggle, against American imperialism and American monopoly will achieve it. And we must eliminate therefore any formulations—even be it only a few words, that might tend to blur this important conception and



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

95

task that is before our Party. (Applause.)

*Ch.*: Any comrade speaking should be prepared to close his remarks in five minutes.

*Morris (Illinois)*: Comrades, I think that, while we must recognize that there is an increase in world tension between the imperialist states and the oppressed peoples, or the people who recently gained independence, and the socialist states, nevertheless the idea of the striving for peaceful coexistence is still valid. Not only is it valid, but we, who claim to be Marxists and Leninists, should understand that the idea of peaceful coexistence was not something that came into being only in recent years. This has been a policy for which the first workers' republic strove for from its very inception, in order to achieve an understanding with the rest of the world for peace. You will understand that, at the beginning, there was only one workers' state, and it could not hope, after the revolutionary struggle was defeated in other countries, to remain in being without the idea of a long struggle, which took into consideration the idea of peaceful coexistence with other social systems. I say this because we have to answer the imperialists. They say that Communism is out to conquer the world, that it is responsible for the war tensions and so on, while the reverse is true. And it isn't merely a change of tactics on the part of the socialist states.

We have to become more involved in the struggle for peace. There is a big debate raging on foreign policy

in the United States. And some that should be our allies are lining up on the other side. You know that the liberal forces, so-called, represented by the people on the *New Republic*, the people around the magazine *The Reporter*, in the universities and intellectual circles, are trying at the present time to condemn the policy of non-involvement, let's say, as a policy of appeasement. They are talking about our poor allies, the way they've been deserted by the State Department. And they attack the Eisenhower administration for the only thing which they should not attack it for.

Where were we in this debate? Where were we when this Professor Morgenthau came forward with a so-called liberal peace policy and *The Reporter* talked about "peace-mongering"? And they are continuing this debate, and we are not involved in it.

And there's another problem. There's the problem of the labor movement. While it is easy to say, in general, that the labor movement was on the side of the State Department, but it's not so completely. The labor movement had some struggles with the State Department. Take the question of colonialism. Yes, the Meanys and others may support the State Department, but you read about the struggle where labor wanted to send observers to Algeria and Tunisia, and the French government did not permit these observers in there. So, therefore, we have to reach labor. No matter how it raises its slogan in its concrete form, the fact is that when the labor movement at the beginning of the year out-

lined its program, one of the first demands was peace. We have to concretize this.

Finally, take this present situation in the Mid-East, and the fight against the Ike doctrine, of intervention. Congress is having an investigation. They are going to investigate what happened to the price of oil. Every American is involved in this. Here is a concrete way to link up the struggle for peace with what is happening every single day.

And then here is another thing, in conclusion. The question of non-intervention and isolationism. I think that, when the American people talk about isolation or non-intervention, they have in mind peace, and just because we have an international concept doesn't mean that we have to scoff at the idea of isolationism. It should be utilized—the instinct of isolationism, non-interference—in the struggle for peace. I say this, comrades, because the casualty during this discussion was to look inwards without being involved in the struggles of the people. I think we have an opportunity to change this situation now. (Applause.)

*Irwin (New York)*: It seems to me that in the addition proposed to the draft resolution relating to the aggression in Egypt, a serious omission has been made, and I wonder whether or not the committee gave any consideration to the role played by the United States government in relation to the specific attack on Egypt. Now, I'm sure that none of the comrades here have any illusions as to the role played by the United States government, and the

reason for the kind of intervention that it made in helping to bring that particular aggression to an end. However, it seems to me that it would be a serious mistake, it would be closing our eyes to what actually happened in the world, to totally ignore the role played by our government.

Now I'm not very expert at formulating questions in relation to international policy. However, I would like to offer an amendment to the committee to cover this point. I don't stand by the words, and if they want to change it to make it better, that's all right with me. But the essence of the amendment would be to add somewhere in paragraph 2 in this proposed addition to the draft resolution concerning the international situation the following: The conflict of interests between British and French imperialism, on the one hand, and American imperialism on the other, placed our own government in the position of playing an important role in bringing this aggression to an end.

*Sid (Up-state New York)*: I am speaking in support of the resolution as presented by Comrade Gates, and in opposition to the general formulation made by Comrade Weinstone. I'd like to make the point here that the contradiction in the resolution is a contradiction in life; it's a very genuine contradiction. And it is not the formulation in the resolution that we must oppose, but the contradiction within the imperialist world which makes such objective facts exist. There is no question about the fact that the Eisenhower administration took a forward

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

97

step at Geneva, and a backward step in its Eisenhower doctrine. We cannot, in our resolution, overlook the fact that these are two objective facts. We do not negate either one of them. We do, however, point out to the people, as well as to our own organization, that when the Eisenhower Administration moves forward under pressure of the people, it can be a progressive step. When it moves back under pressure of imperialism, it can injure the interests of the people. I do not think that we should close our eyes to progressive steps, even taken by an imperialist force under pressure. Nor do we close our eyes to the backward steps taken, as in the Eisenhower doctrine.

I think this whole movement of peaceful coexistence which is progressing, not retrogressing, in the main, is one which must be viewed objectively from every aspect. Those positions which are forward positions we approve and fight for and try to advance further. Those which are backward we point out to the people and fight against them. Our position is not one of support for reaction; it is support for progressive movements in every direction. Therefore, I am in support of the resolution and opposed to the Weinstone formulation. Thank you. (Applause.)

*Al (New York)*: I want to speak in favor of the formulations presented here by Comrade Weinstone, and I also believe that the resolution as a whole needs to be even further strengthened on this question. I agree with Comrade Morris that the struggle for

peaceful coexistence started with the very inception of the first socialist republic—a basic point—in the struggle against Trotsky around the question of the possibility of building socialism in one country, which could not be done without its existing in a world where there were also capitalist countries.

I believe the struggle for peaceful coexistence has been an essential part of our Party program for many years, and that what's new in the world has strengthened the possibilities of achieving victory, and not that now that it's brought us to our senses, we've got to fight and see the possibility of peaceful coexistence. That's been our fight in every phase of our work—our struggle against war, over many years. I think that, after the war, the strengthening of the socialist camp, the lessons learned by the people of the world in the war, and so on, have increased the possibility for winning this fight. And it is a fight. Peaceful coexistence must be fought for. And it's not enough to say that the situation in the world is such as to bring it about.

Especially on the part of the American Communists, the American working class, their special job is not to register developments in the world, their special job is the exposure of American imperialism, which is a main threat to the peace of the world; which is a main obstacle to the liberation of the colonial peoples, and which is the main organizer of counter-revolution in the socialist countries. And our Party, to fulfill its responsibility, to the American working class and the world, must make its major point the exposure of

the role of American imperialism and the organizing of the people in the struggle against that imperialism.

I believe it is not enough to say that for lack of time, and maybe in some other resolutions, we don't deal enough with the question of Latin America. That is our job—that is one of our number one jobs—the exposure of and the struggle against American imperialism and the subjugation, economic, and political, of Latin America. I think we must reject the line projected only last January by Norman Thomas when he said that the Latin American dictators, such as Batista and others, are trying to fool the democratic United States, and further, when he said, Latin America is full of pseudo-democrats, who trample on the rights of man in the same way that the Soviet dictatorship does. I think that this only conceals the main enemy—American imperialism, and makes an excuse for an attack against the best fighters of the Latin American people.

And I say that, if nothing else, our resolution must make clear that our main job is to expose the fountainhead of world reaction, American imperialism, and organize the people to fight it. In this way, we will bring into life our slogans for the possibility of peaceful coexistence. (Applause.)

*Ben Davis (New York)*: Comrades, I wish to support the formulations of Comrade Weinstone, and to say just a few more words on this question. Now comrades, I have heard Comrade Lil Gates' presentation here, and there is much that she says with which I

can agree. But my opinion is, comrades, that in fighting for peace, and in fighting for peaceful coexistence, our Party has to have a class struggle approach to this proposition. And we cannot consider that the class struggle ends at the water's edge of our own country, that the class struggle is taking place on an international scale.

The great possibilities of achieving peaceful coexistence did not arise out of the brow of Jove. This was a direct result of the growth of the socialist forces in the world, the burgeoning colonial liberation movement, and the beginning collapse of the colonial system, and the sympathies of the peoples of the world for peace and freedom for the colonial peoples in all the capitalist countries.

And incidentally, comrades, it is my opinion that we must tackle, not only just a critical attitude toward the Eisenhower administration and its policies, but we have to come to grips with this whole concept of a free world, which is being led by American imperialism, and British and French imperialism. We have to challenge that whole concept, and the whole basic role of imperialism, and that Geneva was something that arose with its great possibilities, as a result of the growing strength of the working class forces of the world against the imperialist forces of the world.

The class struggle which we have in our country, and which takes place in all capitalist countries, is a reflection of and a part of the basic class struggle on an international front which is taking place between world impe-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

99

rialism and the world socialist system. And we will have peaceful coexistence, and we'll be able to realize this prospect, to the effect that we seek to uphold, to strengthen the hand of the world socialist system, of the working class forces all over the world. And that is the basic necessity of proletarian internationalism, and not to water down in any sense our struggle against American imperialism.

Now this is not a struggle at all that must be placed against our aim of an anti-monopoly coalition. This is a part of that struggle. But our Party has a special vanguard role to play in connection with this proposition, and what is it? It is our role to find new ways, modern ways, more self-effacing ways, but nevertheless, firmly, to introduce into the ranks of the working class and the masses of people in our own country a consciousness of the struggle against imperialism as imperialism!

This is our link with the colonial peoples of the world. What is it that ties us with the people of Latin America, the people of South America, the people of Asia, and the people of Africa? It is precisely our struggle against imperialism, and American imperialism, in the first place. So we have to talk differently about this, and place this question centrally, as well as our fight to establish an anti-monopoly coalition in our own country.

Now, comrades, it seems to me, in the struggle for peaceful coexistence, which is much more possible today than ever before, I think that we have to see it from both sides, and that we don't have to, in correcting our past

sectarian methods, set up some new dogma here. That's what we want to avoid. Now, for example, you take the phrase in the proposed addition to the draft resolution, part 1, re: the international situation. "The events in Egypt and Hungary confirmed the perspective set forth in draft resolution." I think that's a one-sided statement of the proposition. It just wipes off the fact that thousands of Egyptians were killed, that Israeli forces were killed, that people lost their lives in this war.

Wherein the forces of peace, operating in the spirit of Geneva, were able to halt this war, and we should make no doubt about it—the Soviet Union was the primary one that contributed to the halting of this war—America helped, too, but it was the powerful colonial movement which got America to dissociate herself from Britain and France. But we can't be hesitant and indecisive about this question; it was the Soviet Union, primarily, that offered to shed her own blood, along with China. For the first time, a great power has offered to shed her own blood on behalf of a colonial people against imperialism.

But my opinion is that, wherein the forces of peace were strong enough to halt this war before it really spread—and there was a serious danger of its spreading, just like in Hungary—American imperialism and its allies took advantage of the mistakes made by the Soviet and Hungarian forces. Had they succeeded there, there would have been a serious and tremendous change in the basic relationship of

forces, and we cannot be lulled that world imperialism is not going to change this basic relationship of forces. So just this word—not even a minute, just let me finish this sentence—and that is, comrades, that wherein the peace forces were strong enough to halt this war, which took place in Egypt against the Egyptian people, it was not strong enough to prevent this war, and we must have a peace movement which is strong enough to prevent wars as well as to halt them after they get started. (Applause.)

*Danny (California):* The section under discussion lists a number of reasons that have improved the peace forces and the chances of peaceful coexistence. However, there has been one factor that I don't think has enough attention in the draft resolution as amended, which is, in my opinion, a very real factor in improving the strength of those forces which have decided that war is no longer a solution that can be tolerated by mankind, and that is the end of the American monopoly on hydrogen and atomic bombs—the possession of those weapons, by more than one side in the present world situation. I think that this situation, the end of the American monopoly, has convinced millions of people that they can no longer sit back and allow those who prefer war-like solutions to continue their machinations unhindered. And while apparently the imperialist powers still feel a degree of freedom to engage in a war against what they consider small second or third rate colonial powers like Egypt, the threat of involvement of forces that represent

bigger powers causes them to retract their position and to retreat very quickly.

Now I would like to amend the section, if I could, and I have only a very rough wording—something to this effect—"The ending of the monopoly on atomic and hydrogen weapons temporarily held by the United States has served to curb those in our country who seek to impose United States foreign policy unilaterally. This more universal possession of nuclear weapons has helped convince many more millions that no war-like solution to future difficulties can be tolerated if mankind is to continue to exist." (Applause.)

*Ch.:* We will hear from the chairman of the committee, in answer to some of the questions raised.

*Lil Gates:* Comrades, I would urge that, on this question, we do not attempt to widen differences where there is no basis for differences to exist. In the opinion of a majority of the committee, the draft resolution as it is now written, with the amendments that you all have, clearly establishes a line of struggle against U.S. imperialism. We do not want to lay ourselves open by adopting a general statement which does not specify what is meant by that motion, to a change in emphasis in this resolution, and for that reason, the committee was not willing to go along with the statement which says that the draft resolution should expose United States imperialism. It feels that it does. And furthermore, with the amendment that is added, that further strengthens it and brings it up to date.

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

101

I also do not feel that there is anything in the draft resolution which is contrary to the question of class struggle, because obviously, when we are talking about a struggle for peace, while this will go beyond the working class, it is a struggle also involving the class struggle, and I don't think we should attempt to judge the merits or demerits of a particular document by how many times we use the word "struggle" or how many times we emphasize the word "fight." We are all agreed on that, so why should it be an issue? (Applause.) What we wanted to emphasize here was a clear line, what is new in our thinking in relation to the question of peaceful coexistence, and for that reason, the majority of the committee did not accept these amendments.

Second, in relation to the amendment that the comrade offered on the H-bomb; it's acceptable to us. We felt that it was implied, or in fact, stated in one way in the resolution, but if the comrade feels that this particular thought would aid, we certainly would accept it.

Thirdly, on the question of the United States role in Egypt; it is true that the United States government played a different role. As I explained to Comrade Irwin, I don't think his particular formulation fully covers the situation, but again, I think that there is no objection to working it out finally in such a way as to indicate what took place in this situation. I felt that his formulation would not cover it because since that time, you have the Eisenhower doctrine on the Middle East,

and we would not simply want to be at fault in ignoring that. If Comrade Irwin would be satisfied with that explanation, I believe it might be satisfactory.

We would urge that we do not quibble about this, but pass the main sense of this resolution, and do it in a way that will be crystal-clear what we are saying.

*Ch.:* The question before the convention is the adoption of the committee's report, in which is incorporated the amendment made by the delegate from California. Are you ready to vote?

*A Delegate:* Point of information: Does the proposed amendment on the international situation include the "Alice in Wonderland" phrase at the end of number two, saying that the intervention in Hungary was primarily the intervention of the imperialists.

*Lil Gates:* I have already explained, comrades, that the sentences dealing with the Hungarian situation are being turned over to the general resolutions committee for consideration, and it does not include that sentence, whatever anyone's opinion may be about it, one way or the other.

*The Delegate:* On Procedure: What guarantee have we, in terms of the scheduling—this is perhaps for the Presiding Committee—that it will be possible to discuss this fundamental event of recent months, that places the entire position of our Party in question, at this convention before the body?

*Ch.:* It would seem to me that every question before the convention runs into the same difficulty. We are trying to do the best we can with all of them.

*Weinstone (New York):* On the question of American imperialism. As I understood it in the committee, the committee was ready to consider it, but it had no formulation before it. I therefore propose, on the question of American imperialism, a short section of one or two paragraphs be introduced, and that this matter be re-

ferred to the resolutions committee for editing, to see if we cannot get an agreement. I am of the opinion that we will get an agreement.

The second point, in regard to the question of "formally renouncing" on page 18, I would like to propose to strike that out. I have the feeling that if we had more time last night that we would probably have come to an agreement on that, too, and I hope the chairman of the resolutions committee would accept a little further discussion in the resolutions committee, and we may come in with that proposal, too, and an agreement on that. At any rate, if there is no agreement, I would propose an amendment to strike out those words on page eighteen.

*Lil Gates:* For the committee: I told Comrade Will I had no objection, and never will have any objection, to considering any motion that is in writing. Since this is being turned over to the resolutions committee, I think it is within Comrade Will's province, or anyone else in the convention, to turn over to the resolutions committee the sense of what they would like to be included, and then that will come before the convention, so I have no disagreement with that proposal.

I do disagree with striking out the few words, because I think that this gives a wrong impression of what is in that section. The section simply describes what happened at the Geneva Conference, and if we are going to be so technical that we want to strike out a few words, we are going to get terribly involved—and the committee felt that we did not go along with that procedure.

*Ch.:* We'll have to rule that the first amendment made has been accepted by the committee, and is a part of the general motion. The second amendment contradicts the motion as a whole, and is, therefore, out of order. The question follows upon the adoption of the report of the committee. Are you ready to vote?

*A Delegate:* Comrades, I was a member of the committee which brought in this report. We were informed by Sid Stein that the officers of number six committee were of the unanimous opinion that to pose the question of Hungary before this convention would be a provocation. I personally do not share this opinion. However, since that is the opinion of the officers of the sub-committee which has to

deal with whether we get a chance to discuss the matter or not—that is why I must ask for a ruling as to whether we can discuss this now, or at some other time.

*Ch.:* I'll have to rule it out of order, because it is not the subject on the floor at this time. And if it comes up, it will come up in a more proper and appropriate form than we are dealing with at the present time.

*A Delegate:* Sub-committee number six on miscellaneous resolutions has taken no action up to this time on any resolutions dealing with Hungary.

*Ch.:* There is no law that prevents sub-committee six, eight or ten from so dealing with it.

*Chairman:* The 3rd section of the report of Sub-Committee No. 1 will be presented by Anna Correa of Colorado.

*Anna Correa (Colorado):* Comrades, this is the report on the 3rd section of the Draft Resolution, called "The Path Ahead." Resolutions dealing with questions under Section 2, "The Path Ahead," have been received from New Jersey, Eastern Penn., Indiana, Illinois, California, Washington, and New York. There are no resolutions that take issue with the line and direction of Section 2. There are no proposals from any state organization or delegation to alter any principled question or to substitute some new major propositions for what is now contained in Section 2. There are a number of Resolutions and proposals for additions to this very important section. Your committee recommends that we agree with the sense of a number of these



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

103

proposals and that we refer them for inclusion when the Resolution is edited. They are as follows: a proposal to include at the bottom of page 30 in the printed copy of the Draft a demand for the elimination of depletion allowances whereby monopolists who engage in the extraction of oil and mineral wealth from the earth are allowed to write off their taxes the depletion of these natural resources and so on. The proposal is that we include a demand for an end to this give-away practice. Also, a proposal that a section be included which deals with the Puerto Rican, Mexican, Indian and other national minorities as special victims of monopoly, pointing up the need for special approaches to these groups as unique sources of strength to the anti-monopoly coalition.

Your committee took note of the fact that a number of state conventions and in some of the pre-convention discussion a certain amount of confusion was evident in relation to anti-monopoly coalition and anti-imperialist struggle. The committee proposes that a brief section be included which clarifies the matter, pointing out that these two are not identical, that the anti-monopoly coalition is one which is capable of embracing vast forces that are either not anti-imperialist as yet or who would not accept anti-imperialism as a condition for joining the anti-monopoly coalition even though they

may become anti-imperialist in the course of events, or forces who have differing views as to what anti-imperialism really is.

Everyone remembers, for example, the shameful attitude of many labor leaders in support of the reactionary Wall Street-backed intervention which overthrew the popularly elected government of Guatemala. And while we denounced such support we would also condemn any effort to read these labor leaders out of helping the anti-monopoly coalition because of it. To equate the anti-imperialist struggle with the anti-monopoly coalition would cause great harm to the development of that coalition. At the same time the Communist Party has a special duty to carry on anti-imperialist propaganda and agitation, to raise anti-imperialist slogans in a politically appropriate manner and to seek to win ever wider sections of the people to the anti-imperialist struggle.

How this is done, in what way is a matter of tactics that must be worked out concretely in each given case. In addition to including a section on this question in the Resolution, the Committee recommends that the incoming leadership issue educational material for further clarification on this matter.

Now the Farm Commission of New York State had a proposal on farm policy, urging that the sense of it be included on page 30 or page

31 of the Draft. We propose to turn over to the editing committee the complete proposal recommending that its essence be included in brief form and because this is a problem of great importance to the Convention, we propose to read a few paragraphs here, and I quote:

"It is our aim to defend the interests primarily of the family farmer against the greed and robbery of the food, feed and equipment monopolies which threaten to put him out of business. We recognize the mutual interests of all farmers in improving the price structure for all farm products. We reject Secretary Benson's concept of the farm surplus as the major agricultural problem today. Government stocks of farm products are insignificant compared to the needs of our citizens and of the world. They are not distributed to hungry consumers only because they are useful to the food trusts in driving down farm prices. We believe that a longer range solution to the problem of the farmer can only come through a rounded program of government protection of family-sized farmers from the trusts. This will undoubtedly include production payment to family-sized farms, a sound soil conservation program to restore soil fertility, energetic government effort to expand the use of farm products to alleviate hunger and undernourishment at home and abroad, low interest loans, publicly owned 'yardstick' processing plants, etc.

"The aim of all farm policy must be to enable the family-sized farmer to utilize latest agricultural techniques

and machinery and to raise his income to a parity with that of other sections of the population."

[The speaker then called attention to the amendment prepared by the pre-Convention Resolutions Committee on the results of the 1956 national elections.]

Finally the Committee proposes the following addition to the end of Part 2 on page 34 of the Draft, following the last paragraph on that page:

"Many questions of the content of the anti-monopoly coalition and especially of labor's role in relation to it remain unanswered. In order for our Party to make its maximum contribution towards helping the labor movement emerge as an independent political force, and thereby promote the progress of the anti-monopoly coalition, it is necessary to determine the present level of development of the working class as distinguished from the '30's and '40's, the character of the labor movement, its present-day program, the direction in which it is moving, the chief ideological questions confronting it, how it can develop heightened political consciousness in the course of economic and other struggles, and many other related questions. Towards this end the National Committee shall organize a series of regional conferences, bringing together National Committee members and representative groups of industrial workers for a common searching into these matters, on the basis of which it shall organize either an extraordinary national conference or a special enlarged National Committee meeting devoted to working out these

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

105

problems in their most essential and basic aspects."

Comrade Chairman, the Committee moves that these proposals and amendments be adopted.

[Motion carried to postpone action pending mimeographing of the proposed amendments.]

*Fred Blair (Wisconsin)*: Amendment, brother chairman. I'd like to make an amendment that specifically the part dealing with the farm question be referred to sub-Committee No. 6 because they have other material relating to this question.

*Ch.*: We are now ready for the report of the subcommittee of the Resolutions Committee on Negro rights and Negro-white unity. I call on Comrade Jackson.

*James Jackson*: Comrades, the chairman of each delegation should have received a copy of the amended version of a substitute section of the Draft Resolution pertaining to the struggle for Negro rights which you have in your kits. It is headed "Rally to the Banner of the Struggle for Negro Freedom—Key to Strengthening American Democracy." Now this is the document submitted by the sub-committee of the pre-Convention Resolutions Committee which has subsequently undergone several amendments and additions and subtractions in the course of the deliberations of the sub-committee of this Convention.

Now because of the length of time I will forego any extended remarks introducing this resolution, but will

read it as amended. However, let me point out one or two facts about the progress of this resolution to this point. There is probably no document you will act on in this convention that has been more vigorously handled, amended and compared with state documents, using numerous contributions to the discussion on theoretical aspects of the Negro question to documents and reports made in state conventions and section conventions in an effort to go through and screen the best ideas that would add to our direction in the preparation of this draft amendment for your consideration.

It is well known that the outstanding exciting feature of struggle on the American frontier of social progress is the great and inspiring struggle being spearheaded by the Negro people in Montgomery, Alabama. It is well to note and to cite the words of Frederick Douglass because this is the week that we observe the anniversary of the birth of Frederick Douglass. He said at one time: "It is well said that a people to whom freedom is given can never wear it grandly as can they who have fought and suffered to gain it. Here as elsewhere what comes easily is liable to go easily. But what man will fight to gain, that man will fight to maintain."

And indeed in the Deep South, the Negro people as demonstrated in the headlines of the daily papers,

hold no illusion that freedom will be given to them as a boon, they are in the process of a determined course of struggle to win it as a natural right. And this great struggle of the Negro people today inspires all Americans to the promise of what America can become with unity, with fierce determination and skillful tactics in struggle.

We have particularly been influenced and guided by a study of a series of state resolutions on this question as well as participating in many discussions with a number of comrades. Particularly the resolutions of Washington, Michigan, Los Angeles County and the California resolution, Illinois, Virginia, South Carolina, Florida, Eastern Penn., Ohio and New York. Particularly these states will recognize certain points of emphasis in this resolution which they contributed to. In addition, there are many other important contributions, which have been submitted in resolutions or statements or letter form which will be referred to a theoretical commission which is dealing with the question of formulating basic ideological premises and policy on the overall theoretical premises of the Negro question. This is ruled out as a province for this section of the Resolution.

Furthermore, one should bear in mind that this is not a resolution in itself. It is a section of the main gen-

eral resolution that this convention is called upon to adopt with all the necessary amendments. And consequently, we should examine the context of this proposed substituted section bearing in mind the context in which it will appear, that is, there will be several other general sections of the general resolution which will also have its relationship and interaction on guiding our work in the field of the struggle for Negro rights.

Now, if you will follow with the copy you have, I wish to read the amended copy, to replace the portion in the Draft Resolution, entitled, "For full economic, political and social equality for the Negro people," pages 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25, of Section 1, and pp. 49, 50, 51 and 52 of Section 4, entitled, "The Party and the Struggle for the Negro People."

[The Speaker then read the text of the Resolution, which appears on page 253.]

#### EVENING SESSION

*February 10, 1957*

*Bill Lawrence (New York) in the Chair*

*Chairman:* The motion is to adopt the resolution on the Negro struggle and Negro-white unity.

[Unfortunately, the tape recorder was not operating during the opening of this session and some speeches were missed.]

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

107

*Harry Haywood (New York):* I greet whatever points towards a program of action in the field of Negro work projected in this resolution. But let us have no illusions. The struggle to put into life even these minimal points can only proceed within the framework of a consistent, relentless fight against the right-revisionist position on the Negro question—a blatant line of abandoning the leading role of our Party in the struggle for Negro rights.

Fundamentally, while the sharpening contradictions and social antagonisms involved in the Negro question are demonstrated in life, the Right attempts to underplay these contradictions—to deny the basic anti-imperialist character of the Negro question, and thus to capitulate to U.S. imperialism.

The Right-revisionist line of trailing behind the top NAACP leadership caught us unaware at the sudden outburst of mass struggle under new, militant, petty bourgeois leadership in the South; and by the vicious, determined Dixiecrat-Wall Street counter-offensive of intimidation and terror. We were training the top Right-reformist leadership, while the masses ran far ahead of them, and us, under new, militant leadership.

The Right-opportunist position on the Negro question was most clearly elaborated by Doxey Wilkerson in No. 2 discussion bulletin. What is his estimate of the present situation? He exaggerates the gains of the war and postwar boom period to the point where he sounds like the Voice of America. Nor does he see the tenuous

nature of the advances made. He “overlooks” the role of U.S. imperialism. His is a line which can only spread illusions, disarm and disintegrate the Negro freedom movement. Fortunately, the Negro people are not following his “leadership.” Wilkerson’s position leads him to the point where even in the face of the Dixiecrat counter-offensive of terror unleashed since the Till case, and gaining momentum during this present period, he can claim that anti-Negro terror has abated in the South!

In his attempt to revise our basic position on the Negro question, Wilkerson tries to make a big point about the out-migrations of Negroes from the Black Belt area. This is a piddling point—a prime example of a schematic non-dialectical approach. It is an attempt to reduce the national question to nose-counting.

The Negro national question involves the entire deep South. The tremendous proletarianization of Negroes in the deep South has only sharpened the fundamental contradictions involved in the Negro question. These changes only emphasize the special, national character of the Negro question.

Wilkerson and the Right do not see the inevitable next step in the face of shattered illusions concerning the role of the Supreme Court and the Federal government. That is, the perspective of a developing national revolutionary Negro movement in the deep South, the eventual aim of which will be some form or degree of autonomy—or sufficient political power in the hands of the suppressed to *guarantee* their

rights. This in no way is in contradiction to the slogan of democratic integration. Thus the Negro people's movement becomes an especially significant part of the international anti-colonialist upsurge—a national revolutionary movement in the heartland of U.S. imperialism, the bulwark of world reaction.

Conditions now exist for a united front of militant, anti-imperialist struggle—for the fight for the hegemony of the Negro working class within the framework of all-class unity, of which a constituent part is the fight for the vanguard role of the Communist Party in the Negro freedom movement. Thus, the Negro working class will emerge as an independent force in the united front—the only consistent force that sees the road ahead, all the way through.

It is not enough to greet these new, heroic struggles in the South. The embattled Negro people want our help. They cannot win alone. They need our Party, and the international working class movement, to support their struggle.

We don't have all the answers. But we *can* distinguish between a revolutionary line and a capitulatory, reformist position as elaborated by Doxey and supported by the associationists.

*A Delegate (New York):* Comrades, the comrades who sent me here as delegate asked that when I come to the National Convention I extend the greetings of the Jamaica section of Queens County and the assurance that we will try to carry on the work of the Party in this period.

First I support the resolution generally overwhelmingly. But in that section dealing with the main weaknesses of the Party, I think that we have to be more specific. For our Party in Jamaica, if you take the field of civil rights, if you take the field of political work, if you take the field of public education, where you find that the Party membership is enjoying broad relationships, you find that they are enjoying positions of responsibility and trust among the masses of the people. But this same approach does not pertain to the Party, even though many of these people are known as Party people. So I think that there must be made a distinction when we speak of relative isolation of the Party between the isolation of the membership and the position of isolation of the Party organization.

Now I'd like to present some means of overcoming the isolation of the Party. I think that for one thing, the Party's isolation is due in a measure to our objective situation, but due to an extent because of our own methods of work. In the main the method of work of our leadership is much removed from the mass struggle. Nothing would bring forward the Party as an organization in the Negro people's movement, I believe, better than if we would step forward within the movement of the people as representatives of the Party.

*Mort (Wisconsin):* I'd like to speak in approval of this resolution. I consider this a very strong document and a very good resolution on the Negro question. And also I wish to approve

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

109

this resolution because it points to white participation in this struggle. In every field, in labor, on the housing question and our other struggles, I think that this is a key point. There were many times in Wisconsin when we thought that our job was always to place the burden of this struggle upon the Negro comrades. And I think that was incorrect. We felt that the main emphasis was to struggle to unite the Negro people, the Negro organizations, behind certain struggles, and we found that that was done without our work. But where the thing was lacking was that our organization or leaders did not participate in the struggles and the problems that the Negro people were faced with.

For instance, just lately there was a so-called "rape" case engineered by the police in Milwaukee in order to intimidate newcomers to our city, and the whole thing was sharpened by the way in which the newspapers cooperated and almost 250 Negro people were dragged into the police were fingerprinted, were mugged, and were put before the line, and it was found that there was nobody that they could identify. Then the NAACP, the Urban League, and other organizations stepped forward and protested. But not any labor unions came forward. Nor did labor nor anything near the Left or on the Left protest. Therefore, I believe that this resolution which points directly at our weakness and tries to correct it, should be endorsed by this convention.

*Frances (Pennsylvania)*: Comrades, first I would like to say that I feel the

Resolution begins to make the first contribution that we've made in a long time in the struggle for Negro rights, in the struggle for Negro liberation. However, we cannot consider this resolution the full program of the Party nor its policy. It is but the first tottering step in that direction. I have found in discussions with comrades over a period of time now and I think the Resolution indicates this to some degree, that the Party cannot do anything but aid the Negro liberation movement, that it cannot at this time play a role of leadership, giving leadership to the movement as a whole.

Now I feel that in committee such an ideology does exist and I think that the Resolution does to some degree permit it to continue, that we would not only be negating the role of the Party, but then why belong to the Communist Party? There are many other organizations that can aid the Negro people's liberation. What it is that we have to contribute is far beyond that. That is the socialist content of our Party, our Marxist-Leninist ideology and yet our vanguard role in the whole Negro liberation struggle.

And I don't feel that at this time we should permit our Resolution to go through without some further examination of this question. A comrade spoke earlier and spoke about in his section the comrades having ties with the masses, yet this has not been related to their membership in the Party or the Party's role in regard to giving them leadership and their leadership there. If we are only a part of that movement without giving it the Com-

munist content that we can give it, then certainly we are not playing our role as Communists within the movement as a whole and within the whole struggle for the building of an anti-monopoly coalition as well.

I would like to see the Committee re-examine this question and write another paragraph or something to the effect on this question.

*Herb Wheeldin (New York)*: There are a number of good things in this Resolution, and yet I find myself in the position of being forced to oppose the Resolution as it presently stands. I shall have to address my remarks to those things which I consider negative in the Resolution because time won't permit me to deal with those things which are positive. I therefore will not touch on the question of the language of the Resolution as a whole. I consider the language is not a model of Communist modesty and I'm not trying to be anti-semantic in that respect. I think, however, the main objection that I would have to this resolution, with certain reservations, is that this Resolution could have been written in 1936 or 1946 and does not take into account the fact that this is 1957. And I find it a little difficult to understand how it is that some of us as Communists who in fact are specialists in change, who want to change the whole world, don't take into account the changes that are taking place. There are constant changes that are taking place in the world. This Resolution makes no reference to a whole series of things which have changed conditions among the Negro people in this country which must be

taken into account before our Party can scientifically develop a program which is going to appeal to the Negro people. In the first place there has been a change in the economic status of the Negro in this country. It's not the same as it was 10 years ago. It seems to me the Resolution must register that.

In the second place, new methods of struggle have developed in the South. This Resolution to some extent is misleading, because you do not get the impression that the new methods of struggle in the South developed, not from a Marxist-Leninist approach, but from the methods which Ghandi employed in India. I think this deserves some analysis and some estimate and some conclusions drawn from that.

Third, it does not record the fact that in the labor movement there is occurring a very basic change. There are 2 million organized Negro workers in this country today, a larger Negro proletariat than exists in many of the smaller capitalist countries in the world, a most important and dynamic factor in helping to influence the political future of the Negro people as well as the entire American people.

The fourth thing is that the Resolution makes no reference to the "Free by '63" program—and '63 isn't too far away. I think it should have something to say on that.

Fifth is, it makes no reference to the tremendous movement which is developing among the white masses, particularly under the leadership of the churches. Today the churches are taking an active role to win advances for the Negro people. Also it doesn't rec-



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

III

ord some geographical and statistical facts that, for instance, New York State today has the largest Negro population of any state in the country. California is third or fourth. These are changes that have taken place in the last 5 or ten years.

Finally, I would say that we cannot have a Resolution that does not at least refer to the fact whether we are still or not a nation in the South, because many of our tactics and approaches arise from that basic position. And I think the Resolution has to at least reflect some opinion on that.

Finally, on a point of personal privilege, I for one as a delegate to this convention want to dissociate myself from the kind of remarks made by Comrade Haywood with reference to Doxey Wilkerson in this discussion. (Applause.)

*Bill S. (New York):* Comrades, I rise for the Resolution. I am not one to say take everything on the Negro question and study it. I happen to be a mass leader and I have been before different government bodies speaking on behalf of several issues (I won't name the issues). But you are all acquainted with the fact that even in Washington on the question of Negro homes being bombed, they won't send anybody to investigate. You know. And I'm against all this examining what we mean, and all that. I'm ready to do something.

On the question the comrade just spoke about, the tactics used in Alabama, and the tactics used by Gandhi, he also tied that up with the economic conditions. But he failed to state that

passive resistance was the key thing in Gandhi's territory where they were sitting on the ground and living in mud huts. Passive resistance is the basis in the South, and they have nice homes down there, and are not living in mud huts. The economic conditions may be better but in New York City when somebody talks about the good standards of the Negro people, and we had one comrade at our state convention, she said, "I don't know what we are talking about when we say the million people have so many dollars invested, etc., etc." She said, "all I know is that when I came here I didn't have carfare. And I live about 21 blocks away and I had to walk to this meeting. And I'm still hungry." So what they are talking about don't mean nothing to me. It just means that they are getting a little more and I'm getting a few bigger crumbs. And as for the American tradition and the Negro people today, they are still hungry. Sure they make \$3000 a year and they pay more taxes in a year than some have paid in a whole lifetime, to say nothing of other things like the cost of living, etc.

Now I am for this Resolution. It doesn't spell out every detail. It never will because in some 75 or 80 years or more of struggle for Negro rights, I feel that we are going to do something about it if we struggle. As long as we talk, we do nothing. So far as the Negro people's struggle is concerned, I'm not worried too much about the Negro struggling for political rights. I think we should worry about what the white comrades are going to do about this particular struggle, because as far as

some comrades are concerned, the Negroes understand that you want to fight but we want to know how you are going to do it.

*Wm. Patterson (New York)*: Comrades, I want to speak first for the Resolution. It is my opinion that this convention cannot report out a resolution of this character without sending a special message to the Negro people. I believe that this convention should send an Open Letter, a special message to the Negro people, and I think that one has been placed in the hands of the chairman of this committee. Secondly, it is my opinion that while the Resolution is an excellent step forward, the vanguard role of our Party is not sufficiently brought out in this resolution. Therefore, with reference to page 4, and the provision marked 1, I would like to make two amendments. One is that while we speak in that paragraph of the role in part of the Judiciary and speak also of the Congressional branch of government and legislative branch of government, there ought as well to be a criticism there of the failure of the executive branch of government to use its police power and the power of its Department of Justice and while I am not formulating that now, I shall formulate it and hand it to the chairman.

Second, I believe that in the same paragraph there should be a specific call for the impeachment of Eastland and maybe some others, but Eastland in particular.

Now I come to a point on a matter which I believe is of vital importance. This Resolution nowhere mentions the

United Nations and yet the attitude of the American government to the Negro people is a violation, not only of the Charter of the United Nations but as well of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations which our Government has not yet ratified. We remember that when a question was raised of this character against the South African government it had such great vitality that the South African government was forced even to withdraw from the League on several occasions. I believe that incorporating in this resolution the question of the failure of the U.S. Government to live up to the charter with reference to the Negroes would have a tremendous impact on the whole world situation in that as far as our Party is concerned, it would bring it forward as carrying out in this way its international solidarity against segregation.

Next, comrades, I feel that also in the United Nations our government has failed to ratify the Convention on Womens Rights. It has failed to ratify the Convention for the Punishment of Genocide, and this also should be put in this resolution.

*Charles (New York)*: I am prepared gracefully to withdraw, keep quiet as I usually do. However, I think the schoolteachers have a contribution to make to this discussion in view of the fact that teachers and parents too are faced with this subject of the integration of the schools, and that's not simply a southern problem. In fact, sophisticated and complacent New York has that problem on its hands

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

113

right now. I know this will be adequately dealt with but I think as a Southerner, born and bred and educated in the South, I do have something to say. As I said to Comrade Berry once, what I have learned about this so-called Negro question I've learned the slow and hard way. But I told him that I had the advantage of studying it from the point of view of a hill-billy of the South.

Now traditionally the poor whites of the South and the Negroes have gotten together very easily on many historic occasions. That's one reason why I'm speaking. But it's not the main reason. Now, as I say, we are faced with a practical problem and here's a good test of our method of work as an opportunity for mass activity—and by the way, I'm for this resolution—I vote for those six pages without a question. I'd vote on faith. I don't think that literally if this were from heaven, six pages would be perfect. But I would vote for this without any amendment.

But on this matter of segregation, I attended a hearing of the Board of Education 2 or 3 weeks ago. I didn't participate, but I listened to the hearing. There were many civic organizations there and numerous teachers organizations. Well, the teachers let themselves in for a lot of hard drubbing. I think it was a leader of the Urban League made the remark, "It looks as if the teachers themselves are going to have to be integrated." But the Teachers Union there spoke out very clearly and unequivocally for enforcing the integration of the New York school system right away. That stood out clear-

ly. For the benefit of the Philbricks, the Wolfsons and Harry Schwartzes, that may be around, I'm not speaking for the Teachers Union. I'm speaking for myself.

*Glendora (California)*: I rise to speak for the Resolution. I worked on the Committee and I think it's a good resolution. Now I feel that for the first time we've come out with something that Negroes want and not what the C.P. wants Negroes to want. (Applause). I really feel that this is important. Now one or two people got up and spoke about liquidationist trends, etc., but I feel this way that the Party has to set down on paper what it believes in conjunction with the actual experiences of life.

Now along these lines I have a lot of criticism of the resolution, especially the part that a couple of other people mentioned regarding the main weaknesses. But I still feel it should be adopted because I feel that out of this we can go home and say, "start a struggle on housing." It speaks of where labor should stand and for the first time it's a practical approach. It isn't full of a lot of words stretched out in our phraseology which I don't think many Negroes and workers understand. Now I think it's very clear and very much to the point on this subject.

Another thing that I feel very sincerely about is on this last part of it. Even though it isn't a drawn-out affair, I think it faces the issue clearly and it does give a slight ideological direction.

*Don Wheeldin (California)*: As distinguished from Herb Wheeldin in New York, I want to say that we have

differences. I support the Resolution (applause). But by the same token I want it unmistakably clear that I thoroughly associate myself with him in his defense of Doxey Wilkerson. (Applause).

Comrades, I understand that there is to be called a special conference that will go into some of these questions that have been raised by those who are not prepared as yet to support the resolution. Such a conference will at that time deal with all the questions of the Negro people as a nation, will deal with the situation as regards Negroes in this country. And as for the question of the language of the resolution, it's my view that that language is consistent with the language used by Negro leaders and may well be an enrichment of the whole body of approach to these questions by our movement.

I think that we can certainly find that in the developing struggles in the South, including Montgomery, that there's one thing that should impress us: that that struggle has begun to develop the sympathy of millions of people, white Americans in these United States. And we are going to have to skillfully develop a program that will address itself to winning that kind of sympathy in order to help bring a full measure of freedom to the Negro people here in our country.

*Paul (New York)*: I have a specific amendment with reference to page 5. Very briefly on the section "forms and methods of struggle" page 5, 2nd par., to state in a positive way, in place of saying, "It is not the task of Communists etc.," that it should say "It is therefore the task of Communists to play their special role basing

themselves upon the forms of struggle and on the tactics which flow from the historic development of the Negro people."

[A number of amendments are proposed from the floor.]

*Parliamentarian*: Amendments even under my liberal interpretation, which really should be amendments going to the committee and not to the floor of the convention, should have been made when the discussion was not closed. Every one of these amendments is in the form of participating in the discussion. We'll be here all night, and we haven't got the time. [Procedural discussion.]

*Chairman*: Before we vote on the motion to accept the report, I'll recognize Comrade Jackson for a few comments on the discussion.

*Jackson*: Just a few remarks, comrades. First of all, certain resolutions have been passed up, like one for further detailizing the relationship of the development of the Negro movement to the anti-monopoly coalition, and certain of these propositions that have been passed up will be given the consideration of the committee.

Just a couple of words on some of the commentary on the resolution as a whole. The resolution was challenged by one of the speakers with the suggestion of tabling on the basis that it utilizes the term "vanguard role." The term "vanguard role" is used; it's made clear as to its function. There's no ambiguity that Communists have a role of initiative, responsibility, and to exercise that vanguard role is a question of correct policies, methods and tactics, and has nothing in common with separatism, where separatist action is not called for. But like all progressive forces, the Communists in the first instance have a responsibility of influence,

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

115

of leadership in the sphere of influence, and policy-elaborating to further the struggle for Negro rights.

In reference to the indictment of the resolution by Comrade Haywood as suffering the influences of right liquidationism, tailism, and so forth, I don't know what resolution Comrade Haywood was addressing himself to. This resolution, in my opinion, and the unanimous opinion of all states represented here through their resolutions committee, is that this resolution neither tails nor projects imagery, but is rooted quite firmly in the realities of the developing people's struggles and the necessity for further developing them. Therefore, in the name of the resolutions committee, I reject their characterization and its accompanying identification of this influence with Comrade Wilkerson, who worked as one of the secretaries in the convention resolutions committee of this sub-committee, along with Comrade Carl Winter and myself, with much of the responsibility for further editing this resolution. Other resolutions made will be presented to the resolutions committee for further elaboration. The comrade from Ohio, after consultation, agreed that the central ideas he was concerned with are already adequately covered in the resolution, and consequently, has withdrawn his amendment.

As to the challenge to the resolution made by Comrade Herb of New York—"it could have been written in any year, in 1947, for example," that "its language is not fittingly modest." In my opinion, this has been adequately answered by Comrade Wheeldon from

California. The resolution starts with the most flaming realities in life—the struggle unfolding, which is a headline phenomenon of our time, which gives tone and inspiration to all phases of the people's struggle. It could not have been written in 1947—that phenomenon wasn't there. It isn't the business of the Communist Party or anyone else primarily concerned with advancing the rights of the Negro people, to preoccupy themselves with the ground already covered. The business of the Communist Party and all other forces of social consequence in the fight for Negro rights is to address themselves to the ground yet to be covered, closing the gap in inequalities. It isn't to catalogue and write hosannas to the achievements that have been wrought out of yesterday's struggle, but the directions as to how to fulfill and realize the necessary and vital universally agreed upon goals of equality now.

The proposal of Comrade Patterson of a special salute to the Negro people from this convention I propose be taken up by the resolutions committee as a whole. We have a copy of such a proposed draft, and I propose that action on it be submitted subsequently. I move the adoption of the resolution, with such amendments as referred to. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* Are you ready for the vote? [Vote taken.] Four opposed. Eight abstentions. Carried.

I will now call on sub-committee No. 4, on the American road to socialism. Comrade Krchmarek of Ohio is reporting.

*A. Krchmarek (Ohio)*: Reporting on the committee on the American road to socialism. This report will be presented in two parts: myself reporting on the American road, and Comrade Blumberg reporting on the resolution on social democracy and the question of the mass party of socialism. In order to conserve time, I will be very brief in the presentation. The committee took note of the fact that there has been broad agreement on the discussion in our Party of this section of the draft resolution, dealing with the general direction and projecting the outlook for a peaceful constitutional transition to socialism in the United States. In fact, the resolutions and amendments submitted to the committee dealt mainly with proposals to strengthen the resolution by emphasizing and clarifying a number of questions, such as intensified class struggle during the period of transition, and the need to spell out more clearly the constitutional aspects of the transition.

The committee came to the conclusion also that this section of the draft resolution raises a number of important theoretical questions which require some intensive study and clarification. We felt that neither the sub-committee nor this convention are in a position to give these questions adequate attention and treatment, and therefore, that something

should be done about it. Among these questions are the following: (1) The role of the state as an instrument of class rule in the period of peaceful transition. (2) The need to elaborate more clearly the specific form of the constitutional procedures in achieving a peaceful, democratic transition. (3) The need to clarify the relationship of the anti-monopoly coalition to the transition to socialism, and the forms of struggle to facilitate this. (4) The need to deal more adequately with the question of democracy and civil liberties under socialism in the United States. On this question of civil liberties, it was felt that a much more positive treatment is needed in presenting the enormous expansion of democracy, far greater than under any bourgeois form of democracy, that would come into existence with the coming in of socialism. In this respect, we should learn from the errors committed in other countries in developing our own forms, which are in accord with the democratic traditions in our country.

The committee recommends that the elaboration of some of these theoretical questions be included in the Party program that is to be undertaken on the basis of the decisions of this convention, as well as in other Party documents.

In view of the above, the committee proposes to the convention the

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

117

following action on this section of the draft resolution: (1) that this convention favors and approves the sense and the intent of the draft resolution, presenting the concept of the advocacy by the Communist Party of peaceful, constitutional, democratic socialism in the United States; (2) that the theoretical questions relating to this question be given serious study and elaboration in the forthcoming Party documents, particularly in the Party program; (3) that in the final editing of this section, it be strengthened along the lines of the concise paragraph in Comrade Dennis' keynote speech, which reads as follows: "The draft resolution's concept of our advocacy of and endeavor to chart a peaceful and democratic and constitutional road to socialism in America has also been approved overwhelmingly. The concept expresses what we American Communists strive for, and is a further development of our established position. It embodies our basic view, that socialism can be established only through a radical and fundamental extension of American democracy, and a revolutionary transformation of all property relations. And it emphasizes that all roads to socialism are roads of mass struggle, waged under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist vanguard. But now this concept takes on new meaning in light of the pro-

foundly new and favorable changes in the world relationships."

Comrade Chairman: I move the adoption of these recommendations by the committee.

*Ch.:* You have heard the motion. Is the motion seconded? O.K., we'll now recognize Comrade Blumberg, and then we'll vote on the whole thing.

*Al Blumberg:* Comrade Chairman and comrades: I have here the second report from sub-committee No. 4, which is a unanimous report.

The resolution on social democracy you have in your kit. Your committee regrets that this resolution on social democracy reached the Party too late for the state conventions and the Party generally to discuss it. We consider this resolution a major contribution to the central problems which our Party faces, to the struggle to overcome our isolation as a Party, from the trade union movement, from the Negro people's movement and struggles, as well as a tremendous contribution to enhance the struggle for an anti-monopoly coalition and for socialism.

This resolution examined those forces in our country which correspond to social democracy. It points out the tremendous role they play in the labor movement and the Negro people's movement. It considers our past errors in regard to how we

dealt with the question of social democracy. What is new especially is our discussion of certain questions with regard to which, as a result of recent developments, our differences with the social democrats have narrowed. It makes the point, however, that these differences have not disappeared. On the contrary, many important ones exist. And yet it calls for, and points the way toward, cooperation despite these differences, based upon an approach which strives for cooperation with such groupings and not for their liquidation as organizations.

Now this is not to say that the resolution is the last word. The committee feels that, in connection with our work on the Party program, there will be a need for further analyzing the role of social democracy in this country, especially with regard to clarifying the question of class collaboration, that there must be a further study and spelling out of these differences which are narrowing between us and the social democrats. The motion is that we endorse the basic ideas of the resolution on social democracy, and ask that, in editing it, it be strengthened along the following lines: first, that it make more clear that the cooperation which we seek is intended, and will in fact result in the strengthening of all participating socialist-minded forces, and in no sense will

result in our seeking to, or in fact taking them over.

Number two, that in connection with our errors, the resolution should expand on some of our positive experiences as well on this question in the late 'thirties.

Number three, that we should make more clear the need, in connection with this question, for mutual and friendly criticism. And finally, as the draft resolution itself does, this resolution should stress left-sectarianism as the main danger, but likewise should indicate the danger of right-opportunism in this movement of cooperation unfolding.

The final point in the committee report is a motion on the question of the other section of the draft resolution part 3, which Comrade Krchmarek did not report on. The committee unanimously recommends the endorsement of the basic ideas on the perspective of an eventual united socialist movement or party. At the same time the committee stresses that this section of the resolution will be strengthened if it includes the following: (1) to make more clear that the perspective of an eventual socialist regroupment is not an immediate perspective, but must be viewed as the climax of a series of struggles and developments, and to make clear that any so-called "quickie" approach to the



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

119

question of regroupment and socialist unity would serve only to weaken our own Party, as well as to distort its perspective and its achievements; (2) that we should make clear that the road to advancing socialist unity in our country is a complicated process with many aspects, and that, in a general sense, this road lies through the following: it lies through the development of joint and parallel action on the main issues of the day. Through participation in these struggles will be found the key to strengthening the socialist components, the socialist element, in the developing anti-monopoly coalition.

Finally, that this road lies through furthering the process of frank and full exchange and discussion that has been developing during the past year; that this can and will lead to the clarification of many questions of program and outlook, and that there is a great need for the Party, at all levels, increasingly to participate in this process. And in relation to the resolution, once again, on social democracy, it will be a very important aid in furthering this process of socialist unification.

Your committee moves that these two motions be accepted by the convention.

*Grace (New York)*: I'd like to discuss the first motion, on the question of the American road to socialism.

Comrade Foster's speech yesterday, one of the things he said that impressed me was that the revisionist trend in our Party has presented the peaceful road to socialism as a mild evolutionary advance instead of a sharp struggle, and I believe that there was some recognition of this in the resolution as it was presented. I would still like to speak against it, because I believe that it represents a departure from the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state and of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and of the varied aspects of the question which the committee itself proposed to study further. And I believe that while we are in the process of studying this question further, and really investigating where we stand in terms of our basic principles, we have no right to adopt such a resolution, which may be actually in opposition to what we decide after further investigation is our basic principle. I believe that this emphasis on the peaceful parliamentary, constitutional, mild and evolutionary road to socialism is a projection of our legitimate and natural desire, which we all have and which we all share for peaceful transition, into an unrealistic and very premature picture of the future relationship of forces that it is impossible to predict at this time here in the heart of world imperialism, and that such a projection is contrary to all of our working class experience in the United States, as well as to our Marxist-Leninist theory.

I propose to substitute for this motion that the section in the draft resolution on pp. 35-36 be removed, and

be replaced by a statement that our Party never has, and does not now, advocate force and violence, that this has always come from the ruling class, here as elsewhere, and must be expected with increasing intensity from the imperialists in America, as the working class and people's forces advance in the struggle for socialism.

*Ch.:* I'll have to rule that substitute out of order, because it's contrary to the rules adopted by this convention, namely that, inasmuch as there is a committee report on the floor, no motion to the opposite can be made.

*A Delegate:* I want to speak on the second part of the second report. I am very happy that, after all these years, we are making a serious attempt to analyze the role of social democracy in the United States. I have been unable to read it so far, but I am sure it is going to make a contribution, whether I agree with it or not, if we start to really pinpoint the question of social democracy.

I want to address my main remarks, however, to the question of the mass party, the future perspective for a mass socialist movement or mass socialist party. In my opinion, the way that is projected by the reporter for the committee is by and large correct, and I'm for that 100 per cent, and if we would have had the discussion around this question, instead of the political association, or any other such muddled up thing, we would be much further ahead. We have already passed a motion to build, strengthen and consolidate our Party, but with that, we have to understand that we need a real

vanguard movement in this country, of a mass character, and as time goes along we have to bend everything we possibly can, every effort consistent with the class struggle and traditions here, to move forward for a mass movement and a mass socialist party in this country that can really give leadership to the American workers, and the phase we're in, we're just starting on this thing, and it is something for the future, but this is the thing we have to keep our eye on. (Applause.)

*Comrade Dell (California):* I want to say something about the question of socialist unity; it's partly our own experience in a small area, one of the small counties. It's probably unique because of a certain amount of tradition of struggle around water and power issues that still contribute to the liberal tradition in the area. We've had a lot of differences with social democratic elements in this area for the past ten years, and some very sharp conflicts with them. Our Party there has handled these differences fairly well, and tried to understand how—even during all this cold war period—how we could cooperate. Because the social democrats, who are of many different trends in thinking, have actually been thinking along these same lines.

They've been anti-Communist, and I've been in meetings where they have not been vicious, but they have certainly been red-baiters, knowing I was there and what my politics were, and still now, at this time, because of a development on their part, through getting into organizations and struggle,

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

121

I feel that their position is certainly not the same as it was before. As I say, it may be unique, but as we know because of—around the United Auto Workers and Reuther, I don't know whether he still considers himself a socialist but evidently there is some democratic orientation in the forces around him; they are moving ahead on these issues. I have heard this from a comrade in Michigan. These people—and we know it from reports—they are moving ahead on issues.

But what I want to point out particularly is the fact that, at the present time, especially in the struggle around the Negro question, the social democrats have gone out of their way, because we have been active and have really done a job, in cooperation with them as much as we could. They went out of their way to find ways of cooperating with us.

*Al (New York)*: I want to speak against the report of the sub-committee. Since in five minutes you can't very well go into the matter very much, I want to register my point as to why I am against the report.

I think that in the manner the peaceful road to socialism is developed, it's nothing but creating illusions. While we fight for and want the peaceful road to socialism, there are a number of conditions which are necessary before that can be possible—conditions which can come about only through the mass revolutionary struggle of the people of America, led by the working class, which is led by the vanguard Party, the Communist Party. And I think all these talks about studying

the need for more democracy under socialism than we have now, after spending a couple of years in jail, I don't think we have much democracy, as personified in China, the Soviet Union, and the People's Democracies.

But the proposals made here smack to me too much of national communism, which has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism. On the question of social democracy, I think the effort here is to slur over and obscure the differences that exist between ourselves and social democracy. We are not discussing here what are the possibilities for a united front—that's one thing, but no united front is possible without a clear understanding of what our differences are. United fronts come about not by slurring over differences and hiding them. And one of the biggest questions is social democracy—biggest differences which we must make crystal clear—their rabid anti-Sovietism. And I'm for a united front with social democracy, but always making clear that we are not social democrats. We have a different program, and united front is based on certain common needs which both agree to while we disagree. So I'm opposed to that resolution, because I think it waters down the whole question.

Secondly, on the question of a mass party of socialism, I think that's just pointing to pie in the sky, and will divert, because I think the pre-condition to that is a centering all of our work on the rebuilding and the reconstituting of a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of the American working class, a vanguard party, and when that's

done, that perspective opens up. I am not opposed to a mass party of socialism, but I am opposed to the way it is projected because I think it diverts from the main aim, and only when we build our Party and begin to do work, then we can talk about that question. So I am opposed to the entire report of the sub-committee. (Applause.)

*Sigmund Eisenscher (Wisconsin)*: Comrades, I happen to come from Wisconsin, and I believe that everybody here knows the reasons why I am particularly speaking on this subject. Because if we speak of any place in the states where this is pertinent, we must first of all speak about a state which today even has the prestige of having a mayor who calls himself a socialist, and which has been the heart of a vast movement which had for generations existed under the banner of socialism.

Now we may have our opinions as to the character of the program which constituted the body of theory amongst these people organized, but the fact is that these people had committed themselves to the name of socialism. It would seem strange indeed, I think, if we did not give some thought to the fact that today in Wisconsin the socialist movement has all but died away, that the Socialist Party itself exists as a sort of a skeleton form, and that those thousands of people who, only a few short years ago, had been banded together actively as an organization with tremendous influence in the state and surrounding states, is a shadow of its former self.

The position that our Party in Wisconsin has taken is that we regret—

I repeat, we regret the passage of this vast movement, because it's my opinion that, if the Socialist Party in Wisconsin were a live organization, it would only be because it reflected credit on the type of activity which that movement would be promoting in behalf of its policies. But such is not the case.

However, we are concerned with those thousands and thousands of people who have passed through the doorways of the Socialist Party and out again. And where are they today? They are still living, most of them; they haven't all died away. We are concerned here at this convention—our Wisconsin delegation—that we do not take a position which slams the doors of our movement in the face of those people who today, I believe, can be affected by the type of policy which our Party can adopt at this convention.

I do not think it is in any wise opportunist for me to say that I favor the reports both on social democracy and on peaceful change. Because I believe that it would be the height of opportunism to turn our backs upon these people that we would like to influence in the direction of our movement. Because, if we rejected this report, that's what we would be doing. I think if it would affect us anywhere in this country, it would decimate our movement in Wisconsin—which has suffered enough already from this. (Applause.)

*Bill S. (Illinois)*: I'm terribly sorry to hear Al speak the way he does because I think that his position could lead us to inability to help plow new

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

123

ground for the propagation and discussion of socialism in this country. Al seems to be under the mistaken impression that the Communist Party alone will plow that new ground. And while I believe that the Communist Party must carry on a fight to re-win thousands of its own lost members, and to win new members to its ranks, and to build and strengthen the Party, I think that the situation in the country proves that the CP will not be able to do the job of propagating socialism and discussing socialism on the broadest plane by itself. And anyone who rejects the cooperation, the assistance and the plowing of ground with new elements to make this subject a point for debate throughout the country, it seems to me is missing the opportunity.

I feel that there will not be a mass party of socialism tomorrow, or in the next few years perhaps. Perhaps there was a big mistake in the original proposal about a mass party of socialism, but that is not what is being proposed here, and in fact, even the question of a united party of socialism is being projected to this convention, not as something that will take place tomorrow, or as something that will happen automatically, but as a process for which we will work. How anyone can oppose that concept is beyond me.

It seems to me that there are many individuals who today would be ready to speak up for socialism, or to express the socialist viewpoint on the issues of the day, and who would do it, not in the ranks of the CP—they wouldn't

be in the CP—but they would do it on the public platform in many parts of the country. We have that experience in Chicago. You people, including myself in Chicago, are meeting and working with several dozen individuals who believe that the whole question of the discussion of socialism should be brought to the people of Chicago. Now, we're not moving mountains. We're just making some very, very slow progress.

We're working to develop a forum; we have a discussion group, we're meeting new people, we're finding people who say they believe in socialism and have never been Trotskyites, Schachtmanites, members of the CP, or what have you? They are people who are honest; they have, in my opinion, confused ideas, and they think I have confused ideas, but at least we're talking together, and I think that through the people, yes, the handful that we have gotten together, that we are going to have a forum; we are going to bring together three, four, five hundred people a month in public discussion; we're going to have forty, fifty, sixty people once a month in discussion groups; we're going to meet other people, and we're going to be plowing that ground which will make socialism a public issue, such as it is not in Chicago today, and I think that these tiny efforts are important, and are written into the resolution, and they deserve every support of this convention. (Applause.)

*A Delegate (Ohio):* Comrades, I'm for a party of socialism, too, but I'm against this resolution because it's not

posing here the question of how to build a broad party of socialism, because it's leaving out the whole question of the people who are going to be responsible for building a broad party of socialism. Where is the pre-requisite for a broad party of socialism? You have hundreds of thousands of workers who have been in both the Socialist and the Communist Party for a long period of time. Today these workers in the shops, factories, mills and mines and lumber camps of our country, these workers are experiencing many questions of the attacks against capitalism, not from the point of view that they are trying to build socialism, but from the point of view that they are trying to get some common way to live and to raise their standard of living.

And here you are, instead of throwing the main emphasis on the working class, which will be responsible for building a party of socialism in this country, you're talking about making your main emphasis on trying to organize all-out the little socialist groups that exist in the country today—today they are not even leading their own struggles of the workers that they are supposed to be responsible for. The next thing is you're raising questions here, in my opinion, which are eliminating and actually deviating from the whole policy that you claim to support, and that's the question of Marxism-Leninism.

Secondly, I want to finish up by saying this: it is impossible for myself as a worker, and I've worked in all kinds of industries, to understand how people can reach such conclusions when

you can't even have a peaceful strike in this country, much less a peaceful road to socialism. And here's the whole question of the class struggle, leading up to the proposition of preparing the working class, and organizing them behind any kind of a party, whether it is the Communist Party or this broad party you're talking about, in order to train them what the road is to socialism—you're not saying anything about it, not saying anything about it.

It may be true that these things sound good to a lot of comrades here, and I'm quite sure that this is just a voice hollering in the wilderness. But I'll say this and finish. Anybody in this country that talks about peaceful roads to socialism without first dealing with the whole problem and specific measures of American capitalism and its relation to the exploitation of the working class here, and its whole rotten robbery of the world today, where it's cooperating with the rest of the imperialist forces to rob all peoples in colonial countries and other workers, I'll say what we are really doing here is degrading and degenerating the whole question of Marxism-Leninism. (Applause.)

*Si Gerson (New York)*: Comrades, I rise to support the resolution and the report. It is rather sad that we are discussing the most profoundly important question of the Marxist movement at a late hour in the night, when many of us are tired. Nevertheless, I feel that it requires all our attention and our energies.

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

125

The concept of the American road to socialism has been maturing in our movement for the last twenty years, ever since the 7th World Congress. It is no new or no legal gimmick, designed to meet any specific situation. It is a principled development arising out of a whole new world situation and the situation in our country. And it's nothing new for the world movement. In 1950, the British comrades issued their famous pamphlet, *The British Road to Socialism*. The very greeting we got from Togliatti spoke of the Italian road to socialism, based on the Italian constitution. The historic decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU spoke about the possibilities of a parliamentary road to socialism.

Comrade Foster has been quoted here, but I urge the comrades who have quoted Comrade Foster to re-read some of his writings on the American road to socialism. I specifically refer to *Twilight of World Capitalism*, published in 1949, his *History of the CPUSA*, published in 1952, and his answers to the *Herald-Tribune*, the 23 questions.

The American road to socialism, as outlined in the draft resolution, does not refer simply to dropping ballots in a box. It is a road of titanic economic and political struggles. The peaceful road to socialism will not be accomplished without the victory of democracy first of all in the South, without winning the right to vote, the right to organize, the right to strike. These are going to be titanic struggles. A whole new body of Congressmen are going

to have to be elected from the South and elsewhere. This is not a mild, peaceful, evolutionary thing. This is a road of struggle. But what it does state, is that the road of armed insurrection, as undertaken in a number of European countries, and particularly in the Soviet Union, is not necessarily our orientation. So that these struggles, these great economic and political struggles, must be seen as the prerequisite for the peaceful road to socialism. That is encompassed in the report, and in the draft resolution.

Finally, comrades, the peaceful road is not a prediction. It reflects our orientation, and the possibility, given the gigantic labor movement that we have in the United States, and particularly, the tremendous opening up of democratic possibilities by reason of the historic Negro people's movement. This concept of a peaceful road to socialism is premised on the development of a great new political realignment in our country. That is the prerequisite—an anti-monopoly coalition. We don't see the peaceful road to socialism as simply emerging out of thin air. It emerges as a historic process, the great prerequisite of which is an anti-monopoly coalition, which is our strategic aim for the next period. (Applause.)

*Merle (California)*: I support the resolution. I think that it is very well for us to place before us the perspective of a united party of socialism, of a mass party of socialism. I think, on the question of a united party for socialism, the arguments for it, as presented in the resolution are sufficiently clear and strong, insofar as joint ac-

tion, discussion and so forth. As for a mass party of socialism, I think there are sufficient gaps in the way that the resolution was presented. For a mass party of socialism, in the last analysis, is dependent on the ability of the socialist movement, and first and foremost, ourselves, to merge socialist consciousness with the working class movement in this nation. There will not be, nor can there be, a mass party of socialism, until many thousands of workers become convinced of socialism, and the need to organize for socialism.

I think, therefore, we must strengthen this approach, and counteract any illusions that a mass party of socialism will come about by mergers or amalgamations. We must recognize that a mass party for socialism—and such a mass party will be necessary to accomplish our objective of a peaceful transition—will be dependent on our Party's revitalizing in a new way the slogan of turning the face of our Party to the working class. It will mean that our Party will have to tackle in a new way a problem it has never successfully grappled with—how to become part of the working class movement, and in the course of participating in the struggles of the working class movement, to raise their level of consciousness. It will mean that, in our relationship with other socialist groupings we will have to convince them, too, to turn their face, to join together in accomplishing a historic task in the United States, and that is, merging the socialist consciousness with the working class movement. That is the road to a mass party of socialism.

*James Ford (New York)*: Comrades, I must confess, as the Chairman said, that we are so fatigued that all that I could do here now is to register my opposition to both resolutions, and not to develop it. But I do want to say that I am particularly opposed to the resolution on social democracy. With regard to the question of the peaceful transition to socialism, well, comrades, 35 years ago, I personally, probably, without knowledge of Marxism, would have hailed any news coming out of the South that the Negro people were rising up in revolt against their conditions down there, and it might have been possible in those days, because of the way the Negroes felt.

But today, I would not hail news coming from the South that this magnificent struggle of the Negro people has to resort to force and violence. I would not hail it because, during these 35 years, there has developed a Communist Party of Marxism-Leninism, a party that can give proper guidance to the Negro people and to their allies, the working class. Nonetheless, one can not ignore the fact that there is imminent possibility of provocations against the Negro, and that's an important part of the question of force and violence, of so-called peaceful transition.

What would we do today if tomorrow we read the papers that there is provocation against the Negro people. I'll let you think about that question, and not to wave it aside, but you know, you've got to think dynamically about this question. And as Marxist-Leninists, we must. And I am opposed to this resolution as it is presented now.



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

127

On social democracy. Well, comrades, again, that resolution can serve some purpose for study and investigation, but I don't think it can serve as a document for our Party. I think that we have to consider fundamentally the role of social democracy. It's all right, we can collaborate and go along. But if we take it historically, we haven't, and the resolution doesn't analyze the role of social democracy today, for example. The social democrats in France, the social democrats in Europe, and their attitude to the colonial peoples. I say, comrades, social democracy has to be studied, within the period that we are now living, and I agree with Al that we've got to look into this question of social democracy and know what role it plays, and study it carefully before we can adopt this resolution.

*Mike Russo (Massachusetts):* Comrades, I rise in support of the reports and the resolutions that deal with the prospect of a peaceful transition to socialism in the United States. For some time, we have been saying that our Party is in a profound crisis. So far as I am concerned, and I am sure that I speak for many more, whether or not we emerge from this crisis and take the path that leads to becoming a mass party of socialism in the United States lies along along the lines of a forthright declaration that the American Communists will grasp every possible opportunity to turn these possibilities into a reality. Any other position, in my opinion, will lead to oblivion.

Now, what is there new in the present situation that makes it possible for us to adopt this position, and that

distinguishes it from the past? Now it was always true that we aspired to a peaceful transition, but the new thing is that today we have the material possibility of transforming these desires into practical reality. These are things that did not exist in the past. Moreover, we are able today, because of the existence of these practical possibilities, of bringing our Party, its policy, its theory, its tactic, its leadership, its method of organization, fully into line with this new central concept that emerges as a result of the profound developments that have taken place in this world.

Those comrades who speak against this possibility, and do so in the name of Marxism-Leninism, however sincerely they are motivated, in all honesty are doing violence to Marxism-Leninism, because it is precisely Marxism and Leninism that teaches us and tells us that we now have these practical possibilities. Moreover, no one suggests that they will be achieved in the United States on the basis of present class relationships. In all likelihood, this will take place at a time when we will be surrounded by what amounts to a socialist world. Is there anyone in this room who will say that this profound world-wide development will not have a powerful impact upon the masses of people in the United States, and direct them to socialism as an inevitable necessity in our country?

Moreover, no one is suggesting that, because the possibilities exist, they will automatically become transformed. As Comrade Si Gerson has said, and as others have stated, this will not be

achieved spontaneously, or automatically, but only through sharp struggles waged by the working class of our country, led by the Marxist-Leninist vanguard.

Therefore, I want to underscore the need for this convention to choose that course unequivocally, as the course that can lead to the development of a mass party of socialism in the United States. Moreover, the choice of this course, as I have already indicated, not only does not exclude the development of a broad mass movement and struggle, but this course is based upon the development of the working class in the first place. Therefore, we do not see it as a parliamentary development, as a legal development, without any big mass movement. We see the profound mass movement as the cardinal thing which will transform the legal possibilities and the peaceful possibilities into the reality and bring socialism in our country.

[Motion passed to postpone action pending mimeographing of amended sections.]

MORNING SESSION

February 11, 1957

*Dave Davis (Eastern Penna.) in the Chair.*

*Carl Winter:* The presiding committee proposes to re-arrange the order of business for today in the following manner: that we hear, as first order of business this morning, the report of the resolutions sub-committee on trade union work, that we make a special order of business, no matter where we may be on any other matter

at that time, at 11:30—the report of resolutions sub-committee No. 5 on the Party, taking into account that this has been the subject of greatest discussion throughout our ranks this past several months, and that this convention must afford the greatest possible opportunity for an exchange of views and reaching conclusions on this report as the basis for many other actions of this convention. That would mean that we would interrupt the discussion on the trade union committee report at 11:30, to be resumed whenever this convention decides, at a later time. The plan is to provide a total of three hours for all reports, and discussion on the Party.

The second special order to be taken up at 3:30 covering three matters in the following order: first, the credentials committee report and seating of delegates; second, a partial report from a section of the constitution committee, dealing only with that portion of the constitution which will set out the method of election of the National Committee, so as to provide us with the rules under which to proceed to elect. Following immediately afterwards, the report of the Elections Committee on procedure and a number of other details with respect to the new national committee election. When we have disposed of these three matters under a special order of business beginning at 3:30, we will be in a position to return to the unfinished business on the agenda which we have previously adopted.

I therefore move, on behalf of the presiding committee, these amendments to our previously accepted agenda.

*Ch.:* You have heard the report and proposal of the rules committee. Any questions or discussion? [Vote taken.] The vote is unanimous.

*Ch.:* We proceed to the report on trade union work. The Chair calls on Hal Simon.

*Hal Simon:* We had an attendance of some thirty delegates, most of them comrades from shops and unions, that came from twelve districts in the country: Illinois, New

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

129

York, Maryland, California, New Jersey, Missouri, Washington, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Ohio. These comrades came from their shops and local unions with a variety of opinions based on their local experiences. In spite of differing points of view, at the final session the comrades who were present, some 29 of them, achieved a unanimous outlook in support of the material that is being submitted by the trade union resolutions committee.

It is my opinion that this trade union resolution that is being presented to this convention in its final draft represents a fresh approach to our problems in the labor movement. It is not a revisionist document, and those who believe so should prove it in this discussion. It is one, in my opinion, that will aid our Party to more accurately define our past role, more clearly estimate the labor movement and its problems today, and establish a basic policy for developing our tactical approaches following this convention, in order to begin to break with the problem of our isolation.

This trade union resolution was based on the trade union material contained in the National Discussion Bulletin No. 3. This material was drawn up as the result of wide consultation, with 150 to 200 comrades in industry throughout the country.

However, the original material suffered from the fact that, in the pre-convention discussion, it did not receive the attention that it deserved, since the comrades were discussing what they considered the more decisive problems of the moment. As a result, when the committee came together, it was for the first time able to gather the important and valuable views of many of our shop comrades on the resolution. All comrades were not satisfied with the limited time for discussion, and would have liked to go much deeper into an examination of our detailed problems in industry. As a result of this, some comrades felt that the resolution was inadequate, in that it did not present a more specific plan of work for us in industry. We all agree that such a specific plan of work is necessary, and the suggestion was made in the committee that we hold national and regional industrial conferences following this convention in order to draw up such a plan of work.

This resolution which we are submitting today, with the additions which you will receive, is based on the general line of our draft resolution, and will, in my opinion and in the opinion of the comrades, provide a proper political basis for working out such a plan.

Now, what is the intent, and what is new in this trade union resolution? First, that the AFL-CIO mer-

ger has brought a new quality to the labor movement, that it is playing a greater role in the life of our country. At the same time, there are no illusions in the minds of anyone that there are not continuing difficulties and problems. The AFL-CIO is facing increasing difficulties at the hands of growing powerful monopolies. This is most clearly seen by the workers on the job, who feel it on their backs. And herein lies a very fundamental contradiction, that must be resolved by the labor movement, with our aid, in the next period of time, and that is that these unions which have at times demonstrated their increased strength and power nationally, are more often than not characterized by an absence of strength at the shop level in relation to on the job grievances and struggles.

A highly institutionalized apparatus has been developed, which more and more tends to exclude rank and file participation. This is as a result of the three-year contracts, the long grievance procedures and so on. We Communists, who have consistently been the best fighters for trade union democracy, must in this coming period help the workers to understand that the ability to win new victories will be determined, to a considerable extent, in direct relationship to the participation of the workers themselves. As a matter of

fact, the future of labor struggles hangs in the balance, and they will be difficult ones.

A whole set of new problems is imposed upon the labor movement by the very facts of life. Among these, as our resolution describes, is the question of the struggle for further trade union unity, the organization of the unorganized, and particularly in the South, the need for the shorter work week as a result of growing automation in the plants, the need to extend the alliances of labor with other sections of the people, the need for greater independent political activity on the part of the labor management. Thirdly, our resolution takes note of the debate that's going on on the question of peace and foreign policy in the labor movement, one which we have to give serious consideration to, and not be blinded by the anti-Sovietism of a George Meany or any other leader in the labor movement—George Meany, for example, who just had to step down from the international affairs committee of the AFL-CIO because there is no unanimity in support of his policy.

Now, these are not questions which *we* have determined are the ones which the labor movement must take up in the next period of time. These are questions which are already being discussed and in part being acted upon by sections

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

131

of the labor movement. But we should take note of the fact that these are also questions with which we have concerned ourselves, and thereby, we have a better estimate of the progress and the motion ahead that is taking place in this labor movement, insofar as they are already beginning to grapple with a whole series of questions which we know are extremely important and decisive in relation to the future struggles of labor and the nation as a whole.

What we can modestly contribute is not only a shoulder-to-shoulder fight for these objectives, but to help to give consciousness, purpose, direction to these struggles, so that the struggles of labor around these particular questions can more rapidly permit it to play its role in a developing anti-monopoly coalition in this country.

This resolution briefly examines the contributions of our Party as well as the errors over the last decade. It is our opinion that, despite the highly important and historic contributions over the last period, we have committed gross sectarian errors that have increased our isolation. These were real errors, not imaginary—policy errors as well as tactical. The main responsibility for these errors rests with the national leadership of our Party. These errors included an exaggeration of the strength of the

Left in the labor movement, following World War II, a failure to recognize the serious objective conditions, the severity of the attack on the Left, and the need to modify our approach to cope with the situation, the failure to see the split that was being engineered in the CIO from '46 on, and to over-exert ourselves, when it was still possible, prior to '49, to avoid it.

Our weakness on the whole question of organic unity, particularly after 1952, kept our Party, the traditional and most forceful proponent of unity of labor, from playing its full role on this question. Experiences from comrades in shops show that in the last period we have begun to struggle to overcome these errors, and some limited progress has been made. However, there is a continuing gap between the integration of individual Communists in the life of the unions, and the continuing isolation of our Party. There is a need for an even more detailed examination of these questions, among which we have to determine, much more seriously than we have in the past, to overcome the lack of attention to the work of our Party and its activities at the shop level. This must be corrected.

One of the most important sections of the trade union resolution is its examination of trends and currents in the trade union movement. The

approach of this resolution clashes sharply with our past viewpoint on this question. This is as it should be, for many of the rigid approaches of the past hindered the struggle for a correct united front policy in the ranks of labor.

What is the approach of this trade union resolution? It is our opinion that the time calls for fresh initiative and bold perspective. There have been changes and shifts in the world, in our country and in labor which require new analysis and fresh judgments. Despite the opinions of some comrades that the merger could only result in a reactionary combination firmly fixing itself on the workers, events have shown quite the opposite. What we have seen since the merger, in spite of all the continuing problems, is that there is sharp conflict in the ranks of the trade union leadership.

What is new and what is necessary, in our opinion, for valid judgment, is to see that there is a great deal of fluidity in the labor movement at the present time. The trade union leadership does not line itself up in the same fashion on all individual questions of struggle. This is what is characteristic today. There is no firm and fixed division; the chips have not all fallen on this question. While this is true, there are certain general trends that are be-

ginning to shape up in the labor movement.

Our resolution points out that there is a general relatively more progressive trend that is developing around the former CIO unions and some unions of the AFL, that there is a more conservative and in some instances reactionary trend that is developing particularly around the building trades and the teamsters union, but while the beginnings of these trends are apparent, what is clear is that all firm and hard divisions as yet have not developed. This is extremely important, because here lies the significance and the importance of the intervention of the millions of workers themselves in helping to determine the policies within the labor movement.

Now, we are going to be able to take this question in a fresh way, in our opinion, if we will begin to free ourselves from some of the rigid characterizations of the leadership of the labor movement of the past period. And I am referring to the characterizations of "left," "right" and "center." In no way attempting to pass judgment on the validity of these concepts in past years, it is the opinion of this committee that at the present time the continuing use of these old labels in no way accurately helps us to define various conflicts and differences which exist in the ranks of the labor movement. More

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

133

than that, it was the opinion of many comrades in this committee that what we should be discussing is not the characterization and pigeonholing of individuals but rather the characterization of trends in the labor movement, for individuals shift and change as they have over the last many decades in the labor movement. One who may have been called a Left, a number of years ago, today certainly is playing a most reactionary role in the labor movement, as for example, John L. Lewis. So the labeling of individuals implies nothing in terms of a knowledge of what is going on, and what changes have taken place; more than that, it is our opinion that it tends to inhibit the ability to unfold the widest united front policy around struggles on individual issues within the labor movement.

We feel that the outlook of the draft resolution, the question of the fight for an anti-monopoly coalition, the fight for working class unity in the struggle against the monopolies, this concept which is embodied in the draft resolution should apply in relation to the labor movement, and that is the struggle for all-embracing unity on specific issues of struggle, and where individuals stand in relation to these issues, we will be able to characterize the role of the individual trade union leader. But to pigeonhole him in advance, to make

a pre-judgment as to where he must inevitably stand means, in our opinion, to substitute general historic truths for the practical problems in the labor movement that we face today, and this kind of substitution of general truths for tactical solutions has been a curse upon our Party in the struggle in the labor movement for many years of the past.

I think that on this question of a fresh approach to these trends that exist within the labor movement, our resolution has given us something which will free our hands in the struggles in the labor movement in the next period of time. There are no illusions contained here on the characters of the various trade union leaders. It is not, in our opinion, the decisive question at this moment that we continually repeat that these labor leaders are staunch defenders of capitalism. That they are, and nobody denies that. But we also recognize that, in a labor movement that has been organized today, these same labor leaders also have the problem of the pressure from, and the responsibility to, their own members; and there are conflicting tendencies among these labor leaders, which the rank and file can take advantage of in the form of greater pressure and struggle against the monopolies, and thereby help to resolve some of the contradictions in

the thinking of the labor leaders themselves.

The last section of this resolution deals with the question of the relationship of the Party to the labor movement. It deals with the question, among others, of our class struggle viewpoint as against the question of class collaboration. However, the resolution makes one additional point that we have not made in our documents prior to this, and that is: not only do we take our stand on the question of class struggle as against class collaboration, but also we put forward the outlook of unity of all those who are willing to participate in the struggles of labor, whether they support the idea of class collaboration or class struggle, unity of all forces in the labor movement who claim that they are on labor's side in the struggle on individual issues. We take note of the historical role of the socialist forces in the trade union movement in the past, and that this will undoubtedly and must continue in the future.

Finally, you have before you now a whole series of additions to this resolution. Just to make the following point, the additions include the following questions: first, an enlargement of the trade union resolution on racketeering, which is inclusive of the question of the recent policy statement of the Ethical Practices Committee of the AFL-CIO, as well

as the contributions of our Party in the struggle for trade union democracy. Second, the additions include more on the role of monopoly and its attack on the conditions of the workers. Third, additional material to describe the struggle of the workers in the shop, the economic struggles and the fears of insecurity. Fourth, an additional section on the question of legislative activity of labor. In addition, it places more sharply the relationship between the trade union struggle and the fight to develop socialist consciousness among the workers. There is more on the question of upgrading and the fight for Negro leadership, and so on. A whole series of additions have been made which, in our opinion, strengthened this trade union resolution.

In conclusion, comrades, this resolution, in our opinion, and this whole field of discussion has not been adequately handled in our Party in the course of this pre-convention discussion. Our Party is a working class Party, but the trade union material and the detailed discussion of the problems of our comrades in industry has not been characteristic of the discussion in our Party up to now. Our committee proposes that, in initiating this discussion today, we once again reassert and reaffirm the fact that our Party is a party of the working class, and that we continue



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

135

in a more detailed fashion to seek out the answers that are necessary to break with our isolation in the labor movement. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* The Chair has before it a request of Comrade Foster to speak on this issue, and he intends to present some basic ideas, and he feels that he would need approximately some 12 minutes. What is your pleasure? It has been regularly moved and seconded that Comrade Foster be given the time of 12 minutes. [Vote taken] So ordered.

*A Delegate (Ohio):* I'd like to speak in favor of the resolution. There have been considerable differences of opinion over this resolution, and they were expressed at the committee meeting. I feel that these differences arise out of the particular problems our Party is faced with in trade union work. We have seen, since the establishment of industrial unionism in this country, a considerable growth in the strength and size of the trade union movement, though we have seen no corresponding growth in the socialist consciousness of the organized workers. This has resulted in a relative decline in the strength and influence of our Party in the trade union movement. We are faced with the task of trying to increase our strength, overcome our isolation, in this situation.

I think we should proceed from the basic class outlook that the basic struggle in the trade union movement is the ideological struggle between socialist and capitalist ideology. The union reflection of this is the conflict between class struggle and class collaborationist ideology. However, in to-

day's labor movement, there are many struggles and movements going on which are not direct expressions of this basic conflict. On the contrary. Strong groups of organized socialist conscious workers are practically non-existent. So we have the question, then, what do these movements and activities which we see going on in the trade union movement consist of? To my mind, some of them are expressions of Left trends, Right trends, and so on, but for the most part, they represent differences of opinion in the trade union leadership, conflict over questions which do not directly relate themselves to struggles over class collaboration or class struggle ideology.

The question of Left-progressive, Center and Right groups enters into this question. To my mind, throughout the 'twenties and 'thirties, Left-progressive groups, Center groups and Right groups were clearly defined in the labor movement, because they were crystallized in the process of some thirty years of struggle for certain key tasks: the organization of the unorganized and the building of industrial unionism. Today, however, some fifteen or twenty years later, the labor movement is faced with new tasks which, as yet, have not brought about such a sharp, clearly defined crystallization of forces, with the result that Left-progressives, Center and Right groupings in the trade union movement have become considerably disintegrated, the picture is not quite as clear, and therefore, we face considerable confusion in regard to this question. Without saying much more, I would just say that I think that the draft resolution is correct in

stressing the need for greater flexibility in application of united front policies, of seeking out new forms of building coalitions, with all groups in the labor movement, all trends, all outlooks, and at the same time, undertaking to build, to strengthen, the Left trend, within the framework of the complex situation which cannot be defined as simply and as clearly as it was back in the 'twenties and the 'thirties.

*Wm. Z. Foster:* I want to speak on just one question. That is this matter of the left-center bloc. I think our resolution needs a lot of strengthening in this respect.

Now, we've got to recognize the fact clearly that there are generally three currents in the labor movement: conservative, progressive and Left, or Right, Left and Center, as we often refer to it. Now, this is not only in our trade union movement, it's in every trade union movement. In every political party in the capitalist world, you'll find these three currents. You'll even find them in the Communist Party of the United States—Right, Left and Center, as we have seen in this convention.

Now, comrades, our job is not to ignore such a great reality as this. Our job is to analyze these currents and take a certain position towards them. Now I don't have any argument with comrades who speak about the flexibility and the fluidity of these currents—they are. The personnel changes around various issues and so on, but by and large, these three great currents exist in all countries. Even in the Republican Party, the Democratic Party—you

couldn't name any political organization that doesn't have these three broad currents.

Now our Party in the past has made many mistakes, of course, over the years, but we never had frozen, rigid ideas of these currents; even in the most left-sectarian days, our Party always saw the fluidity and was always ready to change its line to a certain extent to meet these changes.

Now, comrades, the question of these currents—our Party traditionally has followed a policy of working with the progressive group, or the so-called middle group, in the trade unions. Now that has been for the purpose of what? Of developing the full strength of the labor movement. And this combination, if we look into the history of it, was always ready to work with anybody who was following a progressive line, no matter what his previous record had been. And I want to say this, comrades, and you must pay special attention to this fact, this policy we've never discussed much, but this Left-center bloc policy was the main policy of the Communist Party since it was born, among the masses. Not only that, but this was the policy that we build the Communist Party on—this Left-center bloc—and that's how important that is. This policy is not to be just thrown away, just off-hand. If we're going to discard this policy that has played such a tremendous role in our Party life, we had better examine the question pretty carefully.

Now, it was this policy of the Left-center bloc that broke our Party's isolation in the first place. It taught our

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

137

Party not to be against leaders in general, but to work with the constructive forces in the labor movement, and this policy linked us with progressives generally, and broke the isolation of the Communist Party in this country. And we can't just discard a policy of this character.

I just want to say a few words about the historical role of this policy. Even before our Party was established, this policy began to take shape in the Left forces. For example, it was on the basis of a bloc between the Left forces such as they existed at the time and the leaders of the Chicago Federation of Labor and all that that involved which carried national implications with it, that organized the packing industry of this country. It was the same Left-center bloc that organized the steel industry. That wasn't just the Left who did it, that was a Left-center bloc. It was also, when our Party came into existence, after its first year or so of deep isolation, it took up this policy.

I tell you, with this policy of the Left and the center cooperating together, almost instantly our Party became a national factor in this country in the labor party movement. It was the same policy that was the basis for the spectacular successes of the TUEL in its first year. And we had many other examples of this policy in operation as the years went by. Strikes, election campaigns in various unions—for instance, in the miners' union, the left and the progressive forces at that time in opposition to Lewis, we carried on a left-center election campaign of the United Mine Workers that had as its

candidates three district presidents of the UMW then, and we defeated John L. Lewis in his own union with this kind of a combination. This is what we get with this policy. Let's not throw this policy overboard so quickly.

Well, then came the period of the building of the CIO. Now, something very important happened with this policy at that time. We proceeded with the policy, along about 1935, to expand it to take in active cooperation with men that previously we'd been fighting—John L. Lewis, Dubinsky and all the rest of them, in the founding of the CIO. And for fourteen years, our Party carried out this policy of Left-center collaboration, or the Left-progressive is what we called it at the time, in the CIO, and that policy was spectacularly successful, comrades. We built our Party with it! Built the CIO with it as well; certainly we played a very important part. And the basis of it was Left-center collaboration! That was the foundation of our policy.

Now we have had two breaks in this policy since our Party began it about 1921. One break was in 1923, when we split with the middle group over the Labor Party issue. That was our fault, the fault of the Communist Party—a mistake, and it led to one of the most severe isolation periods that our Party has ever faced. Now we had another break with the middle forces, that was in 1949, and that was not our mistake. In spite of all of these hints that we were responsible for that break, we were not responsible for the break in 1949, and we did what we could do avoid it. And to state our

position at the present time, in a certain sense it is that we have broken with these progressive elements. That's really the problem that we confront! We have broken our connections with these progressive elements and this carries with it a large measure of isolation in the labor movement. And our problems in the trade unions can be stated in the same sense, that our main task at this time is to re-establish our contacts with these progressive elements in the labor movement—our natural allies are these progressives—and that's our big job, to develop working contacts with them.

Now, is this a sectarian policy? Well, the history of it shows that it isn't. But let me give you a couple of examples. We worked not only with these middle groups, but every reactionary or conservative who showed the slightest tendency toward any progress, our Party showed a willingness to work with them. Let me give you just three examples. First, in support of Roosevelt. We worked with these conservative elements in support of Roosevelt. We worked with the conservative elements at the head of the AFL in World War II. We worked concretely with these elements in support of the no-strike plan, for example. And the whole history of this policy has been a willingness to cooperate with these conservative elements. We must not consider the American trade union movement as just some sort of an amorphous mass. It is not. It has these distinct currents. And our job at this particular time is to study these currents, and to re-establish our align-

ment with the more progressive forces which, in my opinion, at the present time are pretty much the CIO forces in the labor movement. These are the people we have got to consciously work with. We cannot have a vague, amorphous problem that ignores these natural divisions in the movement and tries to bridge them over. Do you know what that means for our Party? I'll tell you what it would mean. If we have a "Left" orientation, that could mean isolation. That could line us up against officials in general, and all forces that are not of the Left. I don't think we're going to make that mistake. Or, if we have a Right orientation, or a tendency in that way, it could cause us to tail after the leaders of the American Federation of Labor with practically no line of opposition to them. Well, I hope we don't make that mistake. Comrades, we have got to work out in our resolutions a much more definite analysis of the labor movement, and much more alignment with these progressive forces than has been indicated in our resolutions. (Applause.)

*A Delegate (Pennsylvania):* I'm from Pennsylvania. I want to address myself to the question of the Negro in the shops and in the trade unions. How can we raise the question of trade union unity without the integration of the two and a half million organized Negroes in the trade union movement? They are part of one of these currents. The status of the Negro in the shop and in the trade unions is one of second-class citizenship in the main, and

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

139

in particular in the basic industries, in steel. The Negro workers there have organized themselves into caucus movements in some places with a pretty high degree of organization. This movement is growing and expanding constantly.

These Negro workers have organizational experience. They are members outside of their place of work in the fraternal organizations, they are leaders here in the churches, and in the general Negro rights, they play a role; they have many ties and connections. The Negro caucus movement is strongest, I think, in Pittsburgh, in District 15, where you have a movement there—an organization known as the "Fair Share" group. They are supporting an Indiana Negro for International Teller who is running on a program of anti-dues increase and Negro rights. This "Fair Share" group is also—they haven't come out with it yet—but the trend is to support McDonald. But the main question is the question of democratization within the union, and on the job. Chester, Wilmington, Delaware, Baltimore and Houston, Tex., are other centers.

The program of this movement is this: to get Negroes to attend local meetings, to bring democracy into the union and equality on the job. Now these Negro workers going into the locals and taking a role will certainly bring greater democracy to the unions. The trade union movement as yet has not spoken out sharply enough on the question of the South. The bringing of these Negro workers and the role they can play and greater democracy

into the trade unions will certainly strengthen this question and make for a stronger position and greater unity within the trade union movement itself, and therefore, it will strengthen the fight in the South, and bring democracy all over the country to a greater degree.

In this connection it just has to be spelled out and elaborated on in the resolution on the trade union question, and in the resolution on the Negro question.

[Some discussion about delegates getting the floor.]

*Ch.:* The Chair has received complaints from the delegates. They claim that some delegates seem to be speaking on every issue without rotating the discussion. No personal implications meant, or anything of that sort. I cannot deprive anyone from speaking. I have no such authority. I can only appeal to the conscience of the individual comrades to use their best sense and judgment. I wanted to make this perfectly clear because the comrades complain as though we run this situation from the Chair. You determine the situation, not us.

*James Ford (New York):* I don't want to take the time of this convention, and no special privileges in this convention. I don't have to make my protestations here about the endorsement of this resolution, and I won't waste any time with it. I am for the resolution, and I am for the historical role that our Party has played in the labor movement of this country. I wanted to direct my remarks to one point made by the reporter, Comrade

Simon. He said that we should not be blinded by anti-Soviet attack by the officials of the trade union movement. Now, I don't have to analyze all the questions as to how do we deal with this thing, but I think that it would be a disastrous policy if we took that literally, and just closed our eyes to the attack of this trade union officialdom upon the Soviet Union. This is one of greatest issues in the world today—the Soviet Union. And when we see these guys—I don't care who they are—if we can't find a way to clarify this issue without breaking up any sort of a unity, we are not performing our task in the trade union movement. When Meany or anybody else goes around attacking the Soviet Union, we have got to show it to the working class, because when they attack the Soviet Union, they attack the colonial revolutionary movement, and hold back the development of the Negroes in the trade union movement of our country. The two go together. Attacks on the Soviet Union and attacks on the Negro people. That's what I want to say.

And we can take the example of the Labor Party of England. When the Soviet delegation, who went there with the honest intention to establish economic relations, they get up with some damn fool idea of attacking the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union attacked them back, and we have got to do that, too.

Secondly, I want to agree with this idea advanced by Comrade Foster in another sense about the Left-center. If it had not been for the Left-center, and for the policy of our organization in

the 1920's, the Negro workers would never have been brought into this trade union movement. That policy of our organization, based on the Marxist conception, as I stated last night, workers in the white skins are not emancipated as long as workers in the black skin are branded. And from that elementary Marxist principle, we attracted the Negro workers to the trade unions, and today there are two million, thanks to the Communist Party and to our white workers who understood this slogan and brought it to a high level, to make the white workers see that their interests were involved by bringing the Negroes in, that they could not be emancipated without the Negroes. And I'll tell you today—Townsend (unfortunately the late Townsend is dead) but Townsend and Randolph are the presidents of AFL and CIO unions, today, primarily because of the work of our Communist Party in the early periods in fighting for the rights of the Negroes, and these so-called caucus groups of the Negroes were responsible for that. We cannot ignore this question.

And I would say, if a personal reference here—and I don't mean it that way—in 1926, thirty years ago in the Chicago Federation of Labor, if it had not been for the lefts in there, when these scoundrels—and I use that word advisedly—wanted to throw me out of a window in the Chicago Federation of Labor, it was the left trade union leaders that came to my defense and attracted the interest of the Negro workers of Chicago. That's the role our Party has got to play, but I admit,

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

141

on a higher level today.

*Bernie (New York)*: I first would like to say that the connotations of right, left and center in the Communist Party are being used today loosely for identification purposes only. History will yet determine whether it was the right, left or center—whether the so-called right is in fact correct, and what we are dealing with is a left and a super-left. I want to say, first of all, that I support the trade union resolution, even though I consider that it is inadequate on a number of points. One of the inadequacies is in relation to past errors. Where the resolution speaks, in fact, that where ruptures between the left and the center were probable, we tended to make them inevitable. Now, most people at this convention of the Party are ardent proponents of left-center unity. That is not the problem. The problem is what steps does the left take to maintain the left-center unity, under any and all conditions. And if we probe this question, we will see that we were greatly lacking in fighting for left-center unity. In the first place, it seems to me that, under certain conditions, the left must go out of its way to help new center forces to emerge. In the second place, left-center unity contains within it also a relationship of who holds the leadership—the left, or the center? Now we have had examples, both prior to the expulsion from CIO, and in more recent days, which indicate that, within at least one major union in this country, where prior to 1949, the left was willing to let leadership pass into the hands of the center,

the left-center coalition was maintained, that union stayed in CIO, and the left, as a result, was not only able to maintain, but to strengthen, its base to this very day.

Secondly, after the expulsion from the CIO, and in more recent days, we have seen that where we have permitted leadership to pass to new forms of center, which I do not want to elaborate on this floor, it was possible to re-establish unity, and to maintain the left-center coalition within which framework the left was able to maintain and strengthen its base at this very moment. From that point of view, I consider that the resolution is inadequate in dealing with our past errors, in that it does not probe our weaknesses in the maintenance of that left-center unity, which we all espouse.

Secondly, I consider the resolution inadequate on the question of legalizing socialism in the trade union movement. It is not enough to speak of the so-called low level of socialist consciousness in the labor movement; it is necessary to speak of how to change that situation. Now, for my part, I was greatly heartened by Comrade Dennis in April when he launched the slogan of a united party of socialism, even though I knew it was not on the immediate order of the day. I am somewhat dismayed that Comrade Dennis, in his remarks to this convention, made no mention of that slogan. I am more dismayed that Comrade Foster lumps that slogan in a loose category of right opportunist, liquidationist proposals.

Comrade Dennis will explain for himself what his attitude is on the

slogan he issued in April, but I want to say I support that slogan, and if our Party would adopt that position, I know in one industry, not to speak of others, where, working properly in the next years, it would be possible to make an organization—a socialist organization—of at least two or three thousand members, instead of the forty that we now have.

From this point of view, from the point of view that the delegates at the sub-committee all raised the question of how do we legalize socialism, I consider that the resolution is inadequate in that it doesn't even begin to answer this question. (Applause.)

*Manny Blum (Indiana)*: I would like to express my agreement with the report of the Trade Union committee. I think this report gives us a basis for going back with a policy through the application of which we can move forward. There were many comrades—the 29 comrades, including shop comrades, on the committee, which worked on this resolution, which had various differences, as now indicated. In spite of reservations, this was an adequate presentation of a Marxist-Leninist approach to the trade union movement at this particular time. And I think, in the light of all the discussion about a possible split, in the light of wrangling on parliamentary questions on this floor, that is the decisive question that comes out of this convention.

On the question of left, right and center, I agree with Comrade Foster that this has been a basic policy in the history of the American labor movement. I agree with him also that we

have to analyze the various currents at a particular time. But it seems to me that what this resolution says is that the lines of right, left and center have not crystallized at this particular moment in American labor history. For example, Comrade Foster refers to the fact that, in 1936, Lewis became the decisive factor in the center, whereas, just before that, had we determined, without looking at life and its development, that Lewis was to the right, and rigidly adhered to that position, we would have had no left-center coalition. And it seems to me that this is the key to the situation. You've got to examine the main issues confronting the working class at a given moment in history, and on that basis, determine what is the relationship of forces and where these forces stand. And it seems to me that, at this moment, on the main questions of peace and civil rights, various forces are in flux, positions are being taken, shifts are under way, the left itself is far from crystallized, and this resolution says simply that we must free ourselves from the frozen geography of right, left and center, and re-examine this question.

We know, for example, that on the peace question the American labor movement—certain sections of it—are examining aspects of peaceful coexistence, but a position has not yet crystallized. I think, in this connection, the section on page 5 of the resolution indicates a very important feature of this. It says lines have not fully hardened—that means that there is a crystallization taking place, although certain general tendencies seem apparent.



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

143

Around most of the former CIO unions, and some of the AFL, there is developing a relatively more positive and militant perspective. And Comrade Foster says it is particularly around the CIO that a center will develop. I don't think there's a contradiction there. I think it's a question of watching life, and as trends become more crystallized, we take a clearer position as life takes that clearer position.

Hal did not read that section of the resolution which is not before you which defines a developing left trend in the American labor movement and says that there will be a revitalized left. And for that reason, I associate myself with the general remarks of Comrade Foster, and with the resolution.

*Ch.:* Comrades, we are now ready to proceed with the special order of business, the report of the Resolutions Sub-Committee No. 5 on "the Party." The Chair recognizes Comrade Schneiderman of California.

*Wm. Schneiderman (California):* Comrades, I am reporting for the committee which is dealing with part 4 of the resolution on the Party. That section of the resolution which runs from page 40 to page 59, with the exception of the section on labor and Negro struggles, which was taken out and handled by other committees (the section running from page 46 to 52). We deal with the section on the Party up to the point on concepts of Party organization, which was also handled by another com-

mittee—the constitution committee.

The discussion in our committee was limited to three main subjects, and we have divided our reports accordingly. They will be given separately to the convention.

First, on the nature of the errors; secondly, on our approach to our theory; and thirdly, our relations with other Marxist parties. This report will deal only with the section dealing with the nature of the errors, and the other two reports will follow.

Our committee had a total of some sixteen hours of discussion, and this report will speak for a majority of the committee, and will be followed by a minority report. It is no accident that this section of the resolution has had the most intense discussion in the Party. The Party membership rightly felt that in it was a key question which determined all others. Therefore, when most state conventions voted on the line or the direction of the resolution, and when they were voting to endorse, or to greet, or in some other way support the purposes and concepts of the resolution, they were voting especially on the underlying concepts of this section of the resolution on the Party.

These, of course, have been the issues of sharpest controversy and debate in the Party, in the various conventions, and naturally became

the subject for the sharpest divisions in our committee. And though we strove to bring about a unified report, and if possible, a unanimous report, it was clear that these differences were not over this or that phrase, were not over some better way to state the thing, but primarily this sharp division of views dealt with the line and the content of what this discussion is all about.

The key paragraphs are the paragraphs that deal with the nature of the errors, on p. 53 of the resolution, which states: "The most important mistakes made in the period under review were left sectarian in character. These left sectarian mistakes are the main reason for the unprecedented degree for which it is possible for big business and its political representatives to isolate the Party. To end this isolation and expand its mass work, the main task of the Party today is to overcome completely the influence of left sectarian estimates, policies and tactics in all fields of work. In the process of carrying out the main task, the Party must increase its vigilance against right opportunist tendencies, combatting them at all times. This is especially necessary in view of the extremely sharp turn which the Party is now making in many of its basic policies. The necessary struggle against right opportunist errors must be carried on in such a way as not

to weaken the main task."

The debate revolved largely around the sense of this section, and the committee voted, by a vote of 19 for and 6 against, to support the sense and the underlying concept of this question, to endorse its line and direction.

Secondly, the question arose whether we could pose the question of the right opportunist danger in the form of a two-front struggle, that we have a situation where we must even-handedly fight against right and left errors. There were a number of different amendments which posed this question in various ways and degrees. Whether the right danger is the main danger, whether we should conduct a struggle on two fronts, and so on. I am not going to go into the phraseology of them, because the sense of the committee—and I believe of this convention—is to discuss the meaning and content rather than the specific words or phrases.

In each case, the committee voted against what it considered watering down or changing the meaning of the section that I have read, not because there was anyone who felt that we did not need to fight against right opportunism—on the contrary, the comrades saw the necessity for this, in varying degrees, and unanimously agreed to insert the word "increase" so that it reads that "the Party must 'increase' its vigilance against right opportunist tendencies."

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

145

But the great fear of the majority of the committee was that, if we blunted the main struggle, if we blurred or diffused the main lesson, we would lose the main thing that the Party is struggling to achieve this last year—to make a basic change from the past period, to break our isolation by striking at its main direction, without voting down or diluting it. So the majority opposed acting on some amendments which in themselves sounded to some simply as speaking about fighting right opportunism, which is already dealt with in the draft. But these amendments, taken in the context of the whole, would lose the impact of the main thing that we must learn if we are not to be right back where we started from at the beginning of this discussion.

There was also fear on the part of many that it might actually reverse the main direction of the draft resolution, and without attempting to impugn the motives of any comrades who make amendments or such proposals, it is known to this convention and the whole Party that there is a current which is fighting to reverse the main direction of the draft resolution. And it is in this spirit that the votes on the question of the content of this resolution, regardless of phrases, were taken.

The committee adopted a brief motion which attempted to clarify our understanding of what we are

driving at, which said, in essence, that the main character of our errors in the last period was left sectarianism, that this should not obscure the need to fight against right opportunism, especially in the efforts to break with sectarianism, but that we should not obscure that the main task in fighting to change our Party must be to guarantee that we break with those errors which were responsible for our isolation and the position which we are in today.

Comrades, it seems to me that, aside from any wording that we discuss, the delegates must be aware that what this convention must determine is whether we have grappled with the nature of our errors and the roots of our errors. I am only dealing with one aspect of it, and therefore, can deal with it only in a partial way. Because the deep roots of our errors, which go into more fundamental questions, also point to the fact that if our Party is to survive as more than a mere sect, and is to make any real change in the direction of breaking with its isolation, this convention will have to decide whether it will agree to change or blunt the direction that we believe the Party must take, and has begun to take; whether it will see its main task as that of directing its main blow in such a way that all comrades will see it without any confusion or obscurity—the task of fighting against left sectarian errors, not only

as errors of tactics or political estimates, but of striking at the deep-seated dogmatism and doctrinairism which has hung so heavily on our Party in the past.

It is in this sense that the majority of the committee presents this report, and asks you to consider the basic propositions that were put forward in this section of the resolution, and to consider also whatever arguments or amendments there may be made against it, or to change it, because this convention is going to have to determine the main task that is going to lead our Party to break through, and become a mass party and part of a broader mass movement moving in the direction of socialism.

I move you, Comrade Chairman, the adoption of the majority report of the committee for the section on the Party. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* We will now proceed with the report for the minority of the committee. The Chair recognizes Comrade Esther Cantor from New York.

*Esther Cantor (New York):* Comrades, because this has been such a hard-working committee, I have been unable to write out my report, and am speaking from notes. I'd like to first go to the heart of the question. I asked the committee last night one question which, I feel, is a question which faces this convention. How is it possible that in every convention I attended, two questions

were agreed upon: that there was a growing right danger, and that there was need for a struggle on two fronts? That was true of the industrial convention in New York; that was true of the New York State convention. And in this committee, for the first time in my experience in all convention discussions, there was no basic agreement on any amendment to the draft resolution, which everyone, more or less, has said needs serious amendments.

I think that's a serious problem for us, because I do feel responsible, and I am sure the other comrades do, too, that there not be a polarization, that we recognize the questions that do face us. And frankly, I speak now from long experience, and bitter experience, that under the guise of the main line, our Party has jumped from pillar to post, swinging in pendulum, and that there is need for assessing questions in a fundamental way if we are to chart the course for building our Party, and steering the path toward socialism.

And there were just three or four fundamental propositions that I feel were presented. I frankly don't like to speak as a minority, because these propositions were the unanimous majority decision in all the conventions that I participated in, and that one can agree with a number of assessments, and yet feel that there must be amendments in order to guarantee a definite approach. What

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

147

were those propositions? That, in this section on the errors, there is an underestimation of objective conditions, in terms of the status of our Party, that that was not a minimization of our errors, that didn't seek to undermine the errors that we made, and that this was recognized by every convention I attended, and that therefore there had to be a phrase inserted, which said that, in addition to the left sectarian errors, there were objective conditions which contributed to the isolation of our Party. That was point number one.

Point number two was the growing right danger, in my opinion, recognized in practically every amendment adopted so far in the convention to date, regardless of what disagreements still have to be ironed out, regardless of what difficulties we still face.

Point number three was, that in defining the roots of the errors, if you don't define the roots of the right errors that the Party has made in its history, you not only confuse the question of what are the roots of the errors that we have to fight, but you act as if this Party hasn't been in pendulum swings before, and that we have to have a sober approach to the tasks ahead of us.

And point number four was, therefore, a conclusion of the struggle on two fronts, without minimizing the character of the errors.

Now I want to make another point, comrades. I submitted I don't know how many amendments in trying to get agreement on this question—the industrial, and the New York, and this point and that point—because I frankly couldn't understand, including comrades who had voted from New York on this at the New York convention, and then felt that this was not necessary, at this committee meeting. I couldn't understand this point, because it seemed to me that, in every section of the resolution, there had been this growing recognition of the fact.

Therefore, I tried to propose the question in the following way. On the three key paragraphs, the first sentence remain, and be unanimous. It describes the character of the errors of the past; that the second sentence, there just be one phrase inserted, which says approximately that the objective conditions and the left sectarian errors contributed to the isolation of the Party. That the third sentence, we either could change a word or not a word; that wasn't the decisive thing.

That the third paragraph, which the committee proposes be italicized, include the growing right danger, and also include one aspect of the character of the errors—the roots of the errors—both of left sectarianism and right opportunism, which relates to the impact and pressures of U.S. imperialism on our course

in all periods and all phases of work.

And finally, in an effort to remove the impact of the struggle against left sectarianism with this question, I suggested that the struggle on two fronts be discussed in terms of the roots of the errors, that is, a page and a half after this section, in which I added to the three discussing the roots of our left sectarian errors one section which deals with the roots of our right errors, revisionism, in terms of our history.

I felt that this would not minimize, therefore, the questions of the struggle against left sectarianism, but would balance the source of the historical errors of our Party, include as under consideration the roots of the right opportunist and revisionist errors that have plagued us from time to time, and would highlight the whole question of a mushrooming right danger.

Now, all these points were made in an effort to see whether the committee would not reflect at least conventions that I had participated in, and as Comrade Schneiderman reported, we were unsuccessful. I feel there are a number of errors in the resolution as it stands, and that the issue of the resolution—the resolution as amended—has been the occasion of tremendous debate in our Party, and one of the things that perplexes me is that, with so many criticisms and characterizations of

this resolution, the holy of holies becomes 14 pages of errors, each of which really requires detailed examination and discussion and analysis, and considerable compression, in my opinion, in order to get a clearer picture both of the roots and the character of the errors, and the direction which the Party has to face.

But I conceded the question of the compression of the errors, although, in my opinion, it was one of the most poorly worked out sections of the whole draft resolution. That, I felt, should not be a basic question. But when we say that the main errors of the past were left sectarian, I think that that's generally correct. When we point to our dogmatism and doctrinairism, and a whole history which requires that we overcome, not only a style of work but overcome some of the weaknesses in the resolution—which the resolution attests to—its failure to discuss, analyze and project a fully comprehensive program on the issues of American monopoly capital, including issues of the labor movement—when we discuss these errors, it seems to me that history requires—including current history—that characterization of the errors of the past is not adequate to guarantee characterization of the current situation and guarantee the approach to the path ahead.

In my opinion, the characteriza-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

149

tion of the path ahead requires a vigilant struggle against left sectarianism, a recognition of a mushrooming right danger, and a recognition of the need for a struggle on two fronts. And it's in that light, comrades, that I'd like to make four proposals. One, that the convention vote to amend the resolution to include the following: the inclusion of the relationship of the objective conditions to our isolation, in terms of those three paragraphs under dispute; two, in the third paragraph, a recognition of the growing right danger, and a recognition of the past roots of the right and left errors that we have been committing; three, that, on p. 55, in addition to the three errors given, that there be a recognition of the need for struggle on two fronts, based on a description of the right error.

I, for example, felt that the resolution should say something like this: While vigorously combatting left sectarianism and doctrinairism, the Party must at the same time resolutely oppose right opportunism and revisionism, which represents a strong, dangerous current in the Party today. Right opportunism has deep roots in the labor and Marxist movement, dating to the opportunistic features of the Knights of Labor, to Gompersism, to the Socialist Party, which became dominated by opportunism, and from which the left wing correctly split in 1919 to

form the Communist Party. Right opportunism and revisionism became dominant for a time in our own Party, as during the period of Lovestone and Browder. This current strongly expresses the pressure of bourgeois ideology and especially the influence of labor reformism and social democracy, and the theory that the United States constitutes an exception to, and is not affected by, the general laws of capitalist development. Hence the necessity of a two-front struggle ideologically against doctrinairism and revisionism.

Now, comrades, I don't want to hold a brief for this formulation. There may be other comrades who can do it better. All I am saying is that it seems to me that, in a resolution as wordy as this—in a resolution as overwhelming as this—there are four serious weaknesses in the section on the nature of our errors, one of which denies the impact, in my opinion, of objective conditions, in terms of the status of the Party, second, denies the growing right danger, which I think this convention has increasingly recognized, third, fails to characterize the roots of the right error, and fourth, to insist on the struggle on two fronts.

Comrades, I move the adoption of those four points. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* We have before us a majority and a minority report. While the makers of the minority report

did not make it officially, actually, the motion is to substitute the minority report for the report of the majority. Now, that's before the house.

[*Lengthy procedural discussion.*]

*John (New Jersey)*: Comrades, I believe that the main character of our errors since 1946 was left sectarian. I believe that firmly, I believe it flatly, and I don't want any question on it. In the resolutions committee (I say this because the views of some comrades have been not accurately reflected) the feeling of a number of comrades, including myself, was that the draft resolution, correctly stating that the main line of our errors since 1946 was left sectarian, had failed to deepen the understanding of what was involved in that left sectarian course.

It is of that that I would like to speak, particularly at this moment. In doing so, I recognize that the draft represents an advance, let us say, over the April report of the National Committee, which in a most Olympian fashion, said that the source of left sectarian errors was wrong estimates. This is an Olympian view. It assumes that we have a fifty-fifty chance of being right—sometimes we're right, sometimes we're wrong, it's like the fighter who is told to zigzag, and then gets clobbered, and says, "Well, I zigged when I should have zagged." We can't be content with a view that says, "We made a wrong estimate or a right estimate, therefore, our line for ten years is wrong." But rather, we must go deeper into our roots and the style of work of our Party.

To a degree, the resolution attempts

this, but curiously missing from the draft resolution is a very important root, and that is the class root of left sectarianism, which in my opinion must be included in any sober estimation of what are our left sectarian sources. Particularly, the element of retreat or capitulation that is often at the heart of a left line.

Lenin made important contributions to the analysis of leftism. In his view, it has much in common with right opportunism in that both reflect a political retreat before powerful opposing forces or difficult objective circumstances. In the case of right opportunism, the retreat takes the form of abandoning openly Marxist principles. In the case of left sectarianism, it takes the form of abandoning the masses. In the case of the latter, particularly, we must note that it took the form, in the period we are discussing, of a kind of retreat to an ivory tower in the form of left centers because we could not cope with the real conditions in which the American people were willing to struggle against war (which was a real danger), or refused to do so in the enforced conditions that we imposed upon them in the form of left centers. Both, however, represent a capitulation to a powerful opponent.

There is no more powerful opponent on earth of the working class than U.S. imperialism. It is our opponent, it creates the conditions in which we work, and they are difficult conditions. Yet, considering the pendulum pattern of our Party's errors—from right opportunism to left sectarianism, and



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

151

back again—it is curious that our draft resolution overlooks that element in left sectarianism that might lead to a deeper theoretical understanding of our left-right swings, and fails to mention the approach to U.S. imperialism that links them both.

I believe that the omission of this factor from the draft resolution impedes a full understanding of our errors in the period under review, and that it leaves us unarmed to the danger of a right opportunist swing in the period we are coming into. I urge its inclusion, and I wish to point out that the thought represented in this was an 11-10 vote in the resolutions sub-committee.

*Charles Loman (New York)*: I want to support the minority reporter, who maintains that we must at all times wage a two-front struggle against both left-sectarianism and right opportunism, with the orientation, as is generally agreed, that we have to wage a greater struggle at the present time against our isolation, while recognizing the right danger. Now this strong right danger, comrades, is something that will be with us, in one or another form, as long as we have a Communist Party in the United States, and the failure ever to struggle on two fronts is going to lead us into a pendulum swing.

Now I want to quote briefly here from an actual worker in Comrade Schneiderman's own district, as to one of the basic material reasons for this, as to why we will always be confronted with right opportunist tendencies, although at one or another

time we may be isolated. One of the roots of the past errors and the present disastrous situation—it all boils down to the historic, heroic, unequal struggle between powerful American imperialism, fighting in its own back yard against the small, predominantly middle-class American Communist Party. The history of our Party has been a valiant struggle against almost unbelievable odds—David against Goliath. The tremendous superiority and strength of American imperialism over its tiny adversary has, of course, expressed itself in many ways. It expresses itself in the sheer ability to corrupt wide sections of the American working class. The German, Engels, spoke of a bourgeois proletariat for a nation which exploits the whole world. The Russian, Lenin, spoke of the tendency of imperialism to divide the workers, to encourage opportunism among them, and to cause temporary decay in the working class movement. Historically, yes, it is temporary, but meanwhile it presents the American Party with a superhuman task of convincing a working class of the need for socialism that, as Engels put it, merrily shares in the feast of world exploitation.

The major decisive cause of the Party's isolation in the past decade has been the prosperity bubble so carefully nurtured by American imperialism. Yes, persecution and the anti-Communist hysteria were basic and strong factors, but they would never have had their deadly effect without the all-decisive prosperity bubble as its foundation. Voices will of course cry,

"But you are saying what the enemies of Communism are saying, that the Party likes to see the workers in misery, and hates to see them well off." It is no such thing. What Marxist-Leninists have been saying, is that the prosperity which the American workers enjoy is rotten, and for two reasons: first it is built on sand and will not last. We do not advocate depression—we predict it! We have no power to influence capitalist economic forces. To warn the workers of economic disaster is to do them a service. To perpetuate the fairy tale of permanent prosperity is to leave them blind to catastrophe.

Second, part of the economic comforts are based on the exploitation of the rest of the world by American imperialism. Would it be an honest thing for the American Communist Party to conceal this embarrassing fact? Lenin went into great detail about one nation living high and mighty off the backs of other nations. It is not a popular nor a pleasant fact, but it is nevertheless a fact that is an absolutely essential ingredient in the education of the American working class. Anything else is chauvinism and opportunism. Did I say opportunism and chauvinism? Yes, toward Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Negro people at home. Even Europe chips in part of her standard of living to raise our standard of living a little higher. Each colonial nation and continent has its standard of living lowered so that ours may be raised to what is known as the American standard of living. For this very reason, the parasitic character

of modern American capitalism has stood out with particular prominence. To put it bluntly, American imperialism is a swollen parasite.

What are the symptoms? Our unusually large middle-class, and our unusually large number of skilled workers, which represents a shifting of the burden of arduous toil to the backs of the colonial people. We can see it here with the Negro people getting the dirtiest and hardest jobs. Has anyone failed to see the American custom of a white foreman standing over Negro or Mexican workmen digging ditches? It's classic. (Applause.)

[Chairman calls time.]

Comrades, I say that this is one reason why this will always be with us, and we will always have to struggle against right opportunism.

*Bolza Baxter (Michigan)*: Comrades, I think that it is impossible to satisfactorily amend this section of the resolution. I believe that for the reason that the amendments and resolutions submitted thus far deal with only part of this section, and take for granted that we are all agreed on what constituted the errors and weaknesses. Hence the reports do not discuss pages 43-46. Within those pages, there is the charge that we underestimated the war danger, that we underestimated the fascist danger, and things of that sort, and these were errors. Then we proceed to discuss the nature of those errors, without having agreed upon whether these were errors in fact, or whether these are exaggerations, or only part truths, to say the least.

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

153

Secondly, this section treats with the mistakes and weaknesses of the Party as if our whole history has been one serious mass of mistakes and weaknesses, without pinpointing the specific periods in which certain estimates were presented, and indicating the periods in which certain of these incorrect estimates were changed. Unless we are that specific and not so general, then we present ourselves to the American people and to our membership as one bunch of political infants, which I do not think we are.

Therefore, I am hard-pressed to take a position, either on the majority report or on the minority report. I feel that we made perhaps the most outstanding contribution in the fight for peace, taking second place to no organization on the American scene, in that we constantly kept our eyes on the development in the international arena as it related to the question of war and peace, and we brought to the American people a certain consciousness of the war danger as it manifested itself in specific instances. It was necessary at certain times to take a position that would counteract the efforts of the bourgeoisie to give us the impression that the die had been cast, and world war was upon us, as a part of a process of trying to win us for war. These, in my opinion, were correct measures; they did not underestimate the war danger, they did not overestimate the war danger for a whole historic period, maybe, in certain instances, for short periods, yes. It is my opinion that page 43 to page 46 of this draft resolution should be elimi-

nated. In order to present a satisfactory discussion and position on the errors, what they were, their nature, their origin, it is necessary in my opinion that we re-write this in a calm manner, taking all the necessary time to cross the "t's" and dot the "i's." (Applause.)

*Ch.:* Will the next speaker indicate whether he is speaking for the majority or for the minority, now.

*Lou Malinow (New Jersey):* Speaking in favor of the majority report, and against the minority report: First of all, I would like to inform the convention that, at the New Jersey state convention, there was an endorsement of the section dealing with the errors by a vote of 32 for, 3 against, and 2 abstentions. I would like to make my position clear in speaking for the majority report, and against the minority report. I want to state very flatly that I believe that right opportunism is a danger; I also believe that we have to fight on all fronts that would prevent our Party from carrying out a policy designed to win allies in a struggle that we are carrying on.

However, comrades, I believe that this minority report does not do a service to our struggle, because I think there is a difference of estimates as to what is the situation in our Party. The minority report makes the argument that there has been an increase of right tendencies in the Party. It is my judgment that, when we started out this discussion, we said that the main source of our errors and the source of our isolation was left sectarianism. I believe there is a danger

that this lesson will be killed before it is born.

Before this struggle against left sectarianism has gotten off the ground, there has been an avalanche of heavy artillery that has now placed the right danger as the main danger in the Party. I think that this would do a disservice to our struggle, and that if we were to accept this kind of an estimate, it would not be a struggle on two fronts, but essentially, would be a continuation of our policies and practices that we have dealt with in the past.

It seems to me that there is one new feature in our discussion today, different from any time in the history of the Party. I think, in an effort to move in a progressive and forward direction, we are exploring new areas of problems that we never looked into before. I refer to those sections of the draft discussing the errors on those points dealing with doctrinaire and dogmatic approaches to theory. It is my opinion that this new area of exploration is something which, again, must be emphasized if we are to re-root our Party in accord with the needs of the present day.

I think that to those comrades who have been making the big argument of right opportunism in connection with concepts of the Party, we have to say that in actuality, our Communist Party has dwindled over the years because of left sectarian practices and concepts in Party organization. These happen to be the facts of life. It has to be understood that the danger that is crippling our Party and that which has

caused our isolation, is this left sectarianism. The right opportunist danger, in my judgment, is subordinate to this left sectarian danger. In fact, I believe that, to the degree that we will effectively combat left sectarianism, to that degree will we be also making guarantees that we will be fighting right opportunism, because I think that the experiences of the past show that there were many comrades in our trade union movement and in mass work who went off on right opportunist tears because of the failure of our Party to effectively combat left sectarianism. So that I do not see a disconnection between the struggle against left sectarianism and the struggle against right opportunism.

And therefore, Comrades, I believe that the majority report places this question properly, I urge the adoption of that report. (Applause.)

*Olga (New York)*: Speaking for the minority, I come from Lower Harlem, which is a Puerto Rican and working class community. We have on our staff majority and minority forces, besides two other members who have been called middle forces. Yet, when it came to completely analyze the errors of the past ten years in our area, all four of us, including Mercedes, who had voted with the New York State Board, agreed that the main error in our area had been of a right opportunist character. I'm not saying this is the over-all error of the Party; I am talking only about the one area where I have had experience, which is Lower Harlem.

In the thirties, in Lower Harlem,

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

155

we had as many as 1,400 members. As late as 1954, we had 400 members. Today, we have dwindled to less than a hundred, of which only about a third are active. It was the consensus of our section convention, of our staff, that one of the main reasons for the dwindling of our membership and our influence in Lower Harlem has been because the Party has abdicated its leadership in Lower Harlem. In the past, we correctly supported Marcantonio, who was a fighting Congressman, who fought for the rights of the Puerto Ricans, for the Negro people, and for the working people. He fought for peace. But in fighting for Marcantonio, and in supporting the ALP, we abdicated the Party role in Lower Harlem. The people no longer came to recognize as they had at one time in the thirties the one party that was always ready for the Puerto Rican people, that was ready to fight for better housing, for better schooling. In '53, we conducted a campaign to get signatures to put Charney on the ballot to run for district attorney in New York State, in which most of the signatures were obtained from Lower Harlem. I don't think there's a single canvasser who canvassed in Lower Harlem who can tell you that when we knocked on doors and said we were canvassing in the name of the Communist Party that he was turned down, or in any way felt that the community wasn't ready to listen to us if we had been willing to raise our voice on any issue.

When, as late as about ten months ago, just at the beginning of all these

discussions, one of the Smith Act victims, a member of the Puerto Rican Communist Party, came here, and a meeting was held in support, and leaflets were distributed, the people of the community turned out and gave their support to the Smith Act defendant. Yet, with the exception of these two actions, not once has the Communist Party of Lower Harlem taken a stand on any issue which affects the Puerto Rican people. We have abdicated on the issues, and therefore, some of us who are in mass organizations have at times committed left sectarian errors, because we were trying to get our mass organizations to do the work that the Party should have been doing in Lower Harlem, and not the mass organizations. (Applause.)

When the Party abdicates its vanguard role, it forces our comrades who are in other organizations to very often take incorrect left sectarian roles in order to try to get those organizations to do the role of the Party. So I feel that, when the draft resolution slights the right opportunist mistakes we made in the past, and only emphasizes the left sectarian errors, it is making a disservice to the Party. We have to fight on two fronts, and we have to fight equally on two fronts—left sectarianism and right opportunism at the same time, because one leads to the other both ways, and so I support the minority report, and reject the concept that our main fight is on left sectarianism. We have to fight right opportunism because it's not only a growing danger, or a danger of the past

ten months, but these are errors that we have committed in the past ten years, too. (Applause.)

*Jim West (Illinois)*: I speak for and against (laughter). I am for Bill Schneiderman's report in its entirety, I am for Esther Cantor's report, in spite of the fact that I disagree with a few formulations in it. I am against being put in a position where I have to choose between these two. I am for adopting both of these reports. I do not regard these reports as being mutually exclusive. I regard them as complementary and necessary to the unity of our Party. I am for a united Party in a spirit of the statesman-like address of Comrade Gene Dennis; I am for uniting all of our ranks to a common struggle against isolation; I am for reassuring the fears and apprehensions of those of our comrades, in industry, especially, who have become frightened—if you will—at the specter of right opportunism.

I am for reassuring them. In my opinion, the rejection of the majority report will only raise these fears anew. This convention has taken some very important steps toward allaying those fears. I think we have to go further in that direction. In my opinion, the main danger was, and remains, left sectarianism. And I am glad to see the minority report acknowledge this and place this to the fore. In my opinion, we will not fight left sectarianism with right opportunism, or vice versa.

I think the most important thing is not to adopt the idea that we, who have made so many mistakes, are going to guarantee the non-repetition of

mistakes in the future by the words or phrases we are going to adopt here. We're going to make many, many more mistakes. As far as our future is concerned, I am quite optimistic, because, if success comes out of a lot of mistakes, we've got a great big success ahead of us.

From that point of view, the most important thing is to take our membership along with us in this struggle against isolation. I am for the adoption of both reports. (Applause.)

*Ch.*: I'd like to have the next for the majority, if I can.

*Sam Coleman (New York)*: Speaking for the majority, I think it's interesting that some of the discussion would lead you to believe that the mistakes of the past decade were right opportunist. Because all the reasons given were that these mistakes should have been right opportunist. But, in fact, they weren't. And I think we should not lose sight of the fact that what we are discussing is a decade of left sectarian errors.

Secondly, I would like to point out that, while it is true that both right and left errors may occur in flight from struggle, what we are concerned with is, why did we flee in the left direction, if that was what it was. If it was a flight. That's the problem we have to discuss.

Now, it has been said that we are a little weak on self-criticism in our Party, and I think that this has been revealed in the discussion. Self-criticism is not the recognition of errors alone. You've got to say what you did wrong first—I think that's clear.

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

157

And we're trying to do that. You've also got to say why you did it wrong, you've got to do then the hard thing—correct those errors, learn to do it right. And this is what troubles me about the minority report. I think it would prevent our learning how to do it right, it would prevent the correction of these grave, serious errors that have helped to isolate our Party over the past decade.

Why do I say that? Well, we have a section that said why we made the left errors. It says we made them because of our dogmatic and doctrinaire approach to theory. I don't think anyone here can really question that. Speaking for myself, some friends tell me that, in a brief visit between trial and jail in New York, I wrote an article on foreign trade. In the course of that article, in '53, I just casually said that the GAW couldn't operate because you can't have it under capitalism. That's what I consider simple dogmatism. And that's the kind of dogmatic attitude I think I shared. I don't think I was alone.

Are we going to overcome this dogmatism in a week, in a month, in ten months, or a year of discussion? Or do we have to work and study and learn our country and our class forces over a period of years, to correct that left sectarian error and that theory? We say we had as a root source of that leftism uncritical and over-simplified attitudes towards other parties and other socialist countries. I think this is true. Are we going to overcome those over-simplified and uncritical attitudes in a ten months' discussion, or is it going

to take years for us to figure out how to do it? We say that our bureaucracy bears a share of the responsibility. Is that overcome? Who would dare to say that we have solved the problems of our bureaucratic methods of work? I think the minority report would prevent self-criticism, would prevent correction, prevent us from doing that which will take us a long time, because it blurs the whole impact of the discussion of the past ten months, the recognition of the errors and the attempt to find out why we made those errors.

Are there right errors being made? I think there are. I think the proposal that we organize a Fabian Society is a right opportunist deviation. I have heard one comrade suggest that, for the next period, we don't make socialism a major point, because we want the anti-monopoly coalition. I think that's a right deviation and revisionism. I think, however, that these are adequately handled in two ways. First, the resolution is sharpened up, as Comrade Schneiderman reported, with vigilance against these right errors. Secondly, I think that the correction of our left errors is a fundamental way to prevent the so-called false mushrooming of the right, because the right feeds upon the left, and proper struggle to correct the left errors will prevent the development of these right errors.

I agree, therefore, with the way the majority report places this question. I think that, in the true Leninist spirit, this convention must undertake the elimination, the uprooting of the roots

of these errors. I think this requires study, the concrete analysis of concrete conditions of our country, fuller exploration and investigation, and learning how to be Marxist-Leninists on the basis of the very specific conditions which we confront. I consider therefore, there should be nothing said which blurs the fact that what we need to correct has been terrible, deep-going, old, deeply-rooted left errors. I think that the minority report prevents our carrying through the final stage of self-criticism, and I urge full support for the majority. (Applause.)

*Gideon (New York)*: This question, which has been reported by the majority, and the discussion in terms that the minority is not in favor of the idea that sectarianism is a major danger—major danger—I think has to be clear. I think everybody here recognizes it, even the minority report. Agreed, as far as left sectarianism is concerned, it has been and still remains a danger. But at the same time, and the minority report emphasizes, we cannot ignore the question of right opportunism as well. And I think this has to be made clear.

I know, for instance, in my own industry, in New York, where for the past three years, we have been fighting against left sectarianism, and we've been trying to make corrections in our work, and in the past three years, we have been taking positive roles in our union, what does the Party do? Comes down to our organization, makes criticism of our past work, writes articles in *Political Affairs* about our union's leadership, where it developed a situa-

tion where the people are isolated, not by our work, but by our Party leadership in New York City. And I think to blame the membership on the question of left sectarianism is a little—I don't know how to express it—I think the responsibility lies, not in the membership in our industry, but in the leadership, in the bureaucracy in the leadership of our Party in New York City. (Applause.) And I think that they should express this criticism of themselves here on the floor.

The question of right opportunism—now let's not kid ourselves. I know in our union we made mistakes, and I wouldn't say it was definitely in terms just of the membership of our Party, and I am sure that the Party leadership in New York recognizes that the mistake was more on the top leadership in our Party than on the membership down below. We know what happened in our industry. Everything was done on top, and it happened in practically every union. So how the hell can you take the responsibility to the membership, when actually the responsibility should be on the top, on this basic point?

Now I think we have to understand these questions on the basis of trying to realize how to work and how to fight to be able to know to deal with the people who work in the shop. I know how to work with the workers in my shop, and I damn well know that the people on top don't know how to work with these people! Every Party person in my club, in my organization knows much better how to work with



SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

159

the people in the shop than the people on top in our Party! I don't think people recognize this question. They're criticizing every time in terms of our work, and yet do not realize what our problems are in the shop at the same time.

I believe the dangers are on both sides—left sectarianism and at the same time, right opportunism as well. (Applause.)

*Betty:* I speak for neither, and I refuse to be placed in a strait-jacket of speaking either for one or the other. And because I feel so strongly about it, I would insert a contribution by the Illinois delegation, which I want to read for, perhaps, a little lighter feature of our convention.

*"I envy those who seem to know  
That things must be exactly so,  
That black is black, and white is white,  
That wrong is wrong, and right is  
right,  
And things are thus and so.*

*I only wish that they could see  
That they are they, and I am me."*  
(Laughter.)

I agree with Comrade Schneiderman that we must not do anything at this convention to blunt the main direction of our resolution on this question, and I also agree with him that, an equal struggle against right and left, would, in my opinion, be disastrous for our Party. But nevertheless, because of life itself, I am deeply concerned about the failures in the resolution, because of what has happened in the recent months in our Party.

I am concerned about the sentence which says, "The necessary struggle against right opportunist errors must be carried on in such a way as not to weaken the main task."

I am concerned about that because, in practice, it has meant silence on right errors. And when we look back historically in our Party, and I will say that the comrades are blind who fail to see that historically, and in the recent period, left sectarianism has been the disease of our Party, even at the moment when we had the biggest and most intimate connections with the people. But, when I am running in a certain direction, I don't want to run either to the right or to the left. And the danger today is that some people, correctly fighting in order to overcome our left sectarian errors, consider that it is a very good thing to keep silent on the right, because the right is bold, it is growing with new problems, it is for change. But those of us who say that the answers of '33 can't meet the problems of today, when the world is so different, are also not ready to say that we are at a point in history when everything in the past is thrown overboard, and Marxism-Leninism is valid only to the extent that the subjective eye determines what those principles are.

Reality is reality, and Marxist-Leninists arrive at a conclusion collectively. No individual can say, "I will agree with those principles that I consider valid." It is the principles we consider valid that determine the science of Marxism-Leninism, and it is because of this—and a whole number of other

things that have taken place within the recent months—that many of us who were against both extremes believe it is necessary at this moment, while doing absolutely nothing insofar as minimizing that left sectarianism in relation to the people of our country has been and remains the disease, that we include, in a form that doesn't blunt that major struggle, the necessity of vigilance and a struggle against right opportunism. (Applause.)

*John Hellman (Montana)*: I would like to support the position of Jim West, for some important reasons. For one thing, I think there is a tendency to consider that the situation in the Party throughout the country is the same everywhere, and this is definitely not the case. I am certainly not trying to judge what the situation is in New York, but apparently, it is quite different from that in Montana. And therefore, since this draft resolution supposedly applies to the entire nation, including Montana, we have to view it in regard to how we will apply it in Montana, as well as how you will apply it in New York.

And I want to say, too, that we are probably the most autonomous district in the nation. We haven't seen anyone from the National Committee or the National Office in many, many years. (Laughter.) I understand, when I was arrested under the Smith Act, that everybody said, "My God, who is he? I've never seen his name before."

Now, I say we should adopt both reports because, seriously, in Montana, about four years ago after the disasters of the Progressive Party cam-

paign in 1952, we had a complete re-assessment of what everybody was doing, and we really feel that, at that time, we corrected practically all of the left sectarianism that was involved in our work, and that, for the past four years, we have been on the sort of path that apparently now everybody agrees is necessary. We had people who were isolated; we had a certain amount of demoralization, but I'd like to report now, after four years of getting away from left sectarianism, we've had a state convention—while we're very small—where we had complete unanimity, we had a lot of optimism, we have not lost a member in Montana for over three years. (Applause.)

Therefore, I think we in Montana are rightly concerned that the resolution not stress just left sectarianism, because, for us, seriously, that will be a complete distortion of what we will have to do in Montana.

Now, I want to say, too, while there's an awful lot of attitude of, "Well, Montana doesn't amount to much," I'd like to just point to a thing or two that has been achieved in Montana as the result of a real farmer-labor coalition. For one thing, the delegation in the United States Congress is backed by the farmer-labor coalition. In Butte, a labor led coalition has elected the majority on the school board of Butte, and signed a union shop contract with the teachers' union. (Applause.) And we find that, after four years we have changed, we are different, and we're not going to get way out in left field. We find we are ac-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

161

cepted again. This is something that people are learning in practice—that we've changed. And no resolutions will convince them, only our activity. And as I said before, I therefore think that we should adopt both reports. (Applause.)

## AFTERNOON SESSION

February 11, 1957

*Doxey Wilkerson (New York):* The report of the Committee majority would have this Convention affirm a truth which should be clear to all who are willing to look; namely, that the *main* subjective weaknesses of our Party during the past period have been of a left-sectarian character. This is a fact we have got to recognize; because our understanding of how our own errors contributed to the crisis we now face is absolutely essential if we are to move forward again as a vital part of the political life of our country.

The sectarian distortions which have prevailed in our theory and practical work can be illustrated from many fields. Since I did not get the floor last night during the discussion of the Negro question, let me cite a few examples in this field.

Aside from our persecution by the class enemy and its government, what explains our marked isolation from the burgeoning Negro people's movement today? I think the answer is

found in such facts as a theoretical orientation which looked toward the development of an autonomous Negro nation in the Black Belt, which we persisted in holding while obviously the Negro people were moving in quite a different direction. It would be found in the rather sneering and contemptuous approach we have taken to the key middle-class leaders of the Negro people and the organizations which they lead, and a rather one-sided, mechanical approach to the Negro working class, ignoring the real relationship of forces at the present time. It's to be found in such things as our contempt for the legal struggles around the schools, which I think all of us now recognize has loomed into one of the major political issues confronting us at the present time.

Not only in this field, but in other fields that have been discussed here, do we find the same kind of thing true. I heard one comrade discussing the Negro question last night who was obviously back in the 1920's. It would seem to me that we have got to recognize in this field, in the field of trade union work, in the whole question of the fight for peace, the question of the American road to socialism, that a lot of things have happened in the past quarter century, which some of our comrades seem not to want to recognize. Surely it is the main reason—aside from the objective factors that have been operating, but in terms of our own weaknesses—the main reason we find ourselves isolated from the people's movement today. We have persisted in distorted theoretical for-

mulations, in sectarian policies and tactics, the effect of which was to alienate us from those people whom we must seek to influence. And surely it is this that must be recognized as our main error, if now there is any hope of our recouping our lost influence and moving ahead.

I often think, in the course of some of the discussions we have, of the days of my childhood, when I used to go to church and sing, "Give me that old-time religion; it was good enough for my father, and it's good enough for me." When I hear some of the people who are preoccupied with what they call right revisionism, I am inclined to think that what they are really concerned with is that same fundamentalist approach that made my communicants in the church insist that creation happened just the way it is written down in Genesis.

They speak in the name of Marxism-Leninism, but it is not the vital science of Marx and Lenin; it is a dead, dogmatic, Talmudic quoting of phrases, without the recognition that life is moving ahead, and our science must be modified in relationship thereto. I think unquestionably that it is this general approach, reflected in much of our discussion, reflected in our actions during the past decade, which, despite our important contribution, has been the main factor leading to our isolation from the people's movement, and the recognition of that fact by the adoption of the majority report is an essential step in our moving ahead. (Applause.)

*A Delegate (New York):* I speak,

comrades, for both reports, and I wish I could say that I am I, and they are they, because—if I could—then I would say that both reports should be strengthened, and that we should go on from there.

I want to start about criticism. Because I think that there's been no real criticism in any of the discussion bulletins, in any of the papers anywhere, of the leadership giving real criticism to their own errors. (Applause) And I feel that if we had this kind of criticism before, then we could have come into these conventions and begun a real program where we are going from here. But I think that there has been no relationship of how these left sectarian errors were gone into, how we were forced into these errors, because, comrades, I am sure that if it had been up to the rank and file people working in shops, mass organizations, unions, etc., we would never have had the problem of consolidating our membership as closely as we did in the past period because we didn't feel that it was necessary. We were not so isolated from the problems of the workers; we felt this grave danger that hung over us, but we felt our very best protection was if we stayed among these people, fighting and acting on the day to day problems that faced these people.

We don't have time in five minutes to go into these things, but I think that if we did an evaluation in our Party of the whole country, of the economic conditions, of profit, of wages, of cost of living, and an estimate of what we actually have, where we in-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

163

tend to go, that we wouldn't have so much problem of assessing which is right, and what our position is, and what our status is right now. In the South, comrades, in this period when we talk about so much higher wages and etcetera, in the farm areas there was mass unemployment of farm workers, there was a whole mass of small farmers who left their farms to go into factories to work, and if we had estimated that in its proper place, we wouldn't have made the wrong conclusions about the depression coming next year or the year after that, but we would have had a clear estimate of where we were going and the errors would not have been made.

I think we ought to go a little bit into the living standards of people, and their rate of unemployment. Because conditions in the country are not so much as they are in certain sections of New York. Because today, in New York City, there are thousands of people who can't get their relief checks, who have been thrown off the rolls because the list of unemployment is so great that they don't get to them, or they have no way of carrying this out.

I just want to say that even on this business where they talk about—I don't know how to express it, but I don't know what you're going to call the bombs and the shootings and the lynchings and the killings and the repression of the Negro people in the South, who are struggling—and the people who have thrown their children into the struggle—and when a mother throws her children into a struggle of this kind she must mean business. And

I don't know if it's in the main stream of American life, but if this isn't a real radical change, comrades, then our estimates are really bad.

I feel that we have to adopt both these reports, and that we have to go on from there to strengthen it by the facts of life in our every day work in the future. (Applause.)

[Motion passed that the officers of the over-all Resolutions Committee, the officers of the Sub-Committee and the Minority Reporter (Stein, Jackson, Healey, Schneiderman, Sparks, Weiss, B. Nelson and Cantor) get together and try to bring in a unanimous report.]

*Ch.:* We will now hear the second section of the report of Sub-Committee No. 5. This section deals with the question of theory. The Chair recognizes Max Weiss.

*Max Weiss:* Comrades, this first paragraph which you have before you was preceded by a clause which read: "Doctrinaire forms of Party organization, bureaucratic methods of work, etc." The question was raised in the committee that this is interpreted to refer to the fact that the Party form of organization was considered to be doctrinaire, and it was felt that, since this was not the intent of the draft, the best thing to eliminate any such reference was to strike out the clause, "doctrinaire forms of Party organization," which was done, by a vote of 14 to strike, 7 against, 2 abstentions. The second change was the addition of what is now the fourth paragraph, which is

underlined. I read that paragraph to you. It reads as follows:

"In carrying out this central ideological task, we should bear in mind our Party's past errors in the direction of revisionism and guard against any such tendencies in the present period. This must be done in such a way as to reinforce the struggle to overcome the main obstacle which is our deeply rooted doctrinairism and dogmatism, a struggle which is still only in its initial stages."

The Committee felt it necessary to insert that paragraph, particularly because the main weight of this whole section is directed to the fight against doctrinairism and dogmatism and we felt it was necessary to place the struggle against revisionism in the proper context, without detracting from the main direction of our struggle. This proposal was carried by a vote of 19 for, 1 against, with 1 abstention.

Now we come to the fifth paragraph, directly following that. In dealing with this paragraph, our committee was called upon to debate one of the most decisive questions before the Party in the present discussion. A motion was made to strike the word "interpret" from the draft resolution, on page 56, and to substitute for it a section which would seek only "creatively applying" the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The motion to strike the word "interpret"

was defeated by a vote of 14 to 12. In the draft resolution, it's on page 56.

The position of the majority of the committee, which supported retaining the word "interpret" was as follows: such an insertion is necessary as an explicit declaration of the independent and equal status of our Party in relation to all other parties in the world Communist movement in matters of theory. This has not always been the case. The past history of our relations with other Communist parties has largely been one in which we tacitly assumed that the interpretation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism, as made by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was ipso facto valid, and that all we had to do was to creatively apply their interpretation to our conditions.

But this past history, as well as the present situation, proves that conflicting interpretations of these Marxist-Leninist principles inevitably arise. There is, for example, the present controversy between the French and Italian parties over whether the Italian Communist Party's slogan for the reform of that country's social structure violates the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The French Communist Party interprets the principles of Marxism-Leninism in such a way that the Italian position is a departure from principle.

There is, for example, the different

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

165

interpretation of the Marxist teachings of the absolute and relative impoverishment of the masses. The French Communist Party, as expressed in a report of Comrade Thorez, makes one interpretation; however, others, for example the Italian party, present a somewhat different interpretation of this principled question. The letter read by Comrade Duclos to our convention also makes it clear that the interpretation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France of the principles of Marxism-Leninism is such that our Party, and our resolution, is departing from these principles.

Our Party; and particularly this convention, is called upon to decide for itself whether it agrees with the interpretation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism as made by Duclos, or whether we have a different interpretation of these principles, in such a way that we consider our resolution as being consistent with these principles. There are clearly involved here two different interpretations of what these principles are.

Finally, it should be known that, when our Party's exposition of the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism in the United States was first made public, there were important Communist parties which considered this position to be a departure from the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Clearly there was a

difference in interpretation between our Party and these other important parties. It is fortunate that our Party stuck to its guns in our interpretation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism on this important question. History has proven that we were correct on this matter, and that they were wrong.

The majority of the committee is of the opinion that our Party must continue, while paying the closest attention to the valued opinions of other parties, to decide for itself the interpretation of Marxist-Leninist principles. Why did the majority of the committee feel that we cannot accept the formulation "creatively applied" as a substitute for the word "interpret"? For this reason. The creative application of a principle depends upon the prior question of the interpretation of that principle. We cannot agree with any position that some other party will interpret for us what these principles are, and all that we are called upon to do is to apply as creatively as we can their interpretation.

Therefore, the motion to substitute the formulation "creatively applied" for "interpret" cannot be accepted by the majority of our committee, and it was rejected by a vote of 14 to 12.

Now, many comrades agreed fully with the necessity to declare clearly, unmistakably and publicly that it is our Party which must interpret

these principles, that no other party in the international Communist movement should be assumed to have any authoritarian, ex cathedra right to interpret these principles for our Party. However, these comrades expressed fear that, as originally formulated in the draft resolution, doubt might be cast on the objective character or universality of the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Therefore, a reformulation was made of the sentence containing the word "interpret." It was broken into two sentences, and additional language added at the beginning of the paragraph to remove any possible basis for inferring that we cast doubt on the universality or objective character of the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

This reformulation, which our committee adopted, was introduced, and by the way, adopted by the Michigan convention of the Communist Party. This reformulation was introduced at a special meeting of the committee this morning, incorporating that formulation. It was adopted by a vote of 17 for, 1 against, with 3 abstentions, and the agreement not to have a minority report.

I now read that paragraph:

"Marxism-Leninism is a scientific analysis of the universal and objective laws of social development. It is the generalization of the experience of the working class in each country, and of

all lands, and like all science, is an international product. The principles of scientific socialism were first put forward by Marx and Engels. They were further developed in the imperialist era by Lenin. They were later enriched by contemporary Marxists in many countries. The Communist Party bases its theory generally on the cultural heritage of mankind, and particularly on the principles of scientific socialism developed by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. These principles the Communist Party of the United States interprets and applies and tries to develop further in accordance with the requirements of the American class struggle and democratic tradition. We must learn much better how to extract from the rich body of this theory that which is universally valid, combining it with the specific experiences of the American working class in the struggle for socialism in the United States. In doing this, the Party must distinguish better between those additions to Marxist theory which are valid for all countries, and those which reflect exclusively the unique features of one or another country."

Now, additionally, the committee agreed to re-write the paragraph which is two paragraphs away from the one I just read. The main thing achieved here is to retain the full sense of the original in the draft; it eliminates the identification of Lenin or Stalin with certain theories which we consider to be either obsolete or incorrect at this time. In every-



SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

167

thing else, it remains substantially the same. It reads as follows:

“Already in response to these new developments, important new elements have been introduced into the body of Marxist theory by Marxists in many countries, and other theoretical questions are still under discussion. For example, we, as well as other Marxist parties, have already discarded as obsolete the thesis that war is inevitable under imperialism. We have also rejected as incorrect the concept of inevitable, violent proletarian revolution, recognizing the possibility in our country of a peaceful, constitutional transition to socialism. We are in full agreement to study further the question of our theoretical and tactical approach to war, theory of the state, dictatorship of the proletariat, and other questions, which time does not afford an opportunity to resolve at this national convention.”

This re-wording was adopted by a vote of 14 for, 11 against, with 2 abstentions. The only other change made was in language in the last paragraph, which deals with the necessity for the Party to work out a new program. That is, the draft said that we recommend to the National Committee to propose to the convention. Since the convention is here, that has been changed; as the document says, “The convention *instructs* the incoming National Committee.” This is the section which is

proposed now replace the section originally in the draft resolution, beginning the middle of page 55, going to the top of p. 57.

I move the adoption of the committee report.

*A Delegate (California):* Mr. Chairman, brother delegates, friends. I’ve been here for about an hour and a half, and what I wanted to speak an hour and a half ago was on, I believe, one subject which has been a little bit altered from the previous report.

My position in regard to the present struggles that are taking place here in this convention regards to the unity of the Party. I identify myself, and also, I believe, identify many other people where I come from, along the lines of Jim West. I think that what has to be noticed here, from my point of view, is that in this struggle we have to take into consideration that the opinions have to be of a nationwide character, and that no one group must try to subordinate the rest of the country to anybody’s position. (Applause.)

I therefore reject the ruling or whatever you want to call it, that one must come here and speak for or against any proposition. Along with it, I would say that, in the beginning of the convention, it was my feeling that the delegates struck a blow against the disunity that was being created here. But I would caution against anybody getting the feeling that, because we were united yesterday or the day before, now we have the power over somebody

else. I think we still have to guard in these decisions we are making today that unity is the acceptance of both sides, the arguments of both sides of this story.

I would say, insofar as the draft resolution is concerned, that I am in support of the majority as presented here, although I do not like to characterize it as a majority report. I would like to characterize it as those propositions put forth by the committee. I would like to minimize the fact that there is a minority, not from the point of view of not recognizing it, but because to give it emphasis is to sharpen the conflict within the Party here.

Further, I think that one question is being very sadly missed here. As a delegate that comes from working in the shop, working in a minority, as one who has always fought bureaucracy in the Party, and many times been endangered by fighting bureaucracy in the Party, many times a delegate who has taken the position "To hell with it all"—today I find myself here fighting for the preservation of the Party because I see that the historical times today are the first times that I have seen the possibility of really destroying bureaucracy and dogmatism in the Party! And for that very reason, I say, let us look at the essence of the resolution, that the full solution and phraseology of that resolution is not going to be settled here, but by the attitudes the delegates here take back to the rank and file, and let the rank and file give the final analysis by their experience of this resolution. If this

is not taken heed of, and the delegates feel that the phraseology, the battle of the vocabulary, is the dogmatism present in this convention, and unless the attitude—a Marxist, scientific attitude—is taken, that this resolution represents words from the comrades in the field, and there you must take it back to the delegates in the area—not words, but positions of struggle, based on a new historical period. (Applause.)

*Mike Russo (Massachusetts)*: I urge the adoption of the majority report, and the defeat of the minority report. We should categorically reject any implication that, by so doing, a delegate places himself in opposition to Party unity. In my opinion, a vote for both the majority report and the minority report is fundamentally a vote for the minority report, to water down the main line of the draft resolution. I want Party unity as much as anyone in this hall does. But it must be meaningful Party unity. It must be Party unity based on a line that will lead us out of the sectarian rut that we are in, and put us on the highroad to becoming an effective political force in American life. I do not want the kind of Party unity that will hasten our transformation into an evangelical sect. Therefore, I am not for concealing the issues, but bringing them out into the open.

The kind of unity we all desire, I am sure, presumes the existence of differences, sharp differences, provided there also exists a community of ideology. I do not want to accept a polarization of opinion on this or any

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

169

question we are now confronting, as denoting an identity of views on either side, or that one side possesses the sole and exclusive truth on these questions. It is my opinion that the majority of the membership of our Party, having discussed the national draft resolution, believe that the main obstacle to the further advances of our Party exists, and has existed, in the form of deeply ingrained and encrusted sectarianism, against which we have scarcely begun to struggle. I believe that the membership of our Party welcomes this as something new and refreshing. However, there has developed in the ranks of our Party in the recent months a very legitimate concern with the manifestation of certain right tendencies. It seems to me that this convention and our Party should note these developments as an inevitable consequence of any serious discussion against so deeply entrenched a danger as left sectarianism. In my view, the majority report recognizes the emergence of these dangerous tendencies, and proposes to handle them in a way that does not obscure the main danger, which remains left sectarianism.

However, it is necessary to observe that all of the reservations and all of this concern with the developing right danger does not stem from a common base or a common outlook. There is a majority, in my view, although associating itself with the main line of the draft resolution, that is considerably apprehensive over these new manifestations of right opportunism. It is my purpose and my suggestion that this convention—and I believe that the

majority report suggests that—should note this very genuine concern for these right dangers, and make these corrections, as it does, while singling out the left danger as the basically entrenched and strong danger against which we must struggle.

And on the other hand, there is a small group that is raising this question, and the purpose of this group, in my judgment—and I do not wish to impugn the motives of this group in any way, I do not impugn the integrity or the objectives of anyone in this convention, insofar as our ultimate objectives and the aims of our Party are concerned—but nevertheless, it is my opinion that the purpose of this small group is to reverse the main line of the draft resolution, and to make right opportunism and revisionism the main danger to the Party. I say that if we reverse this line, we will destroy what we are beginning to achieve, and nullify the only possible basis upon which we can move forward. (Applause.)

*Morris D. (New York):* I don't want this Party liquidated through left sectarianism or right opportunism. And I say that because someone is afraid that we may put our attack only against right opportunism. I think we all agree that we are against liquidation, from whatever source, but our theoreticians who worked out the formulations of these resolutions forget to look at real life.

I am a practicing Communist, working for a living all my life, and dedicated for over twenty-five years to the

cause of socialism. And I hope to see it in my time. But I recognize a few things—that for the last ten years under that slogan socialism is not on the order of the day, we will fight for day to day efforts, we have identified our day to day tactics with our long range goal of socialism to the extent that we never spoke of socialism. Is that right or left?

Later, we said we've got to reach the level of the masses, and from that level, go one step higher. In many places, we reached the level of the masses, and failed them. We in the labor movement, because we were known as Communists, because we did not honor the profit system, were respected by labor as a class-conscious element in the ranks of labor, who would never betray the interests of labor, because we were socialist-minded individuals. Lately, we won't even fight against racketeering and class collaborationist lieutenants of monopoly capital. It is sectarian to mention it, to the extent that labor doesn't see the differences between us and the reformists. And therefore I feel that this proposition made by Comrade West is a correct proposition. I know we made mistakes, left and right, and we were never isolated from the workers, in spite of the mistakes. When we saw we lost votes, we analyzed it and we did what we thought, in spite of Party lines, many times.

Therefore, I say that we, in the last ten years, have been surrounded by the pressures of right opportunism at all times, that tactically we made left mistakes, because today to fight some-

times for Labor's League for Political Education, or COPE, in certain locals would be considered left, because Hutcheson and the carpenters don't want it.

The question is, how you fight. In the painters union, in the last three years, not one single progressive action was taken in reference to the Negro people's fight for desegregation. Years ago, they did. Is that right or left? To give out a leaflet, regardless what it is, could be considered leftist.

I want to remind the delegates of the following: The history of our Party has been the history of our struggles against American imperialism, and its corruption of American workers with opportunism. Lenin spoke of that bond between imperialism and opportunism. The receipt of the high monopoly profits by the capitalists makes it economically possible for them to corrupt certain sections of the American working class. And our American Communist Party remains free from the ravages of parasitism that afflict the working class of the nation? Of course not! We are an integral part of the American working class. We benefit from its strong points, and we suffer from its weakness. My conclusion is that, while left sectarianism may lead to right opportunism, but right opportunism and left sectarianism comes from the concepts and the poison of our capitalist class. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* I just want to remind the delegates that there are two reports that we are discussing now. On the second,

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

171

there is no majority or minority report.

*Celeste (California)*: I rise as a member of this committee to support the majority report. I would like first to call the attention of the delegates to a very important paragraph which was not read to this body in the first section of the report by the Chairman of our sub-committee. It is the last paragraph underlined on the first page which you got, which fixes some of the responsibility with regard to the errors made, a major share of it on the national leadership of the Party. I read: "While these errors (speaking of the left sectarian errors of the decade) were the property of the Party as a whole, a major burden of responsibility must fall upon the leadership of our Party, who were in the main responsible for the formulation of these sectarian policies and estimates without the widest consultation of the membership. On most occasions, the general membership did not have an opportunity to express their opinion on these questions, so that these policies reflected—not the collective estimate of the entire Party—but rather the thinking of the leadership itself. Had the leadership fully understood the role the membership could have played, many of these mistakes could have been avoided, or corrected more quickly."

We also added, in speaking of the inconsistency in the struggle against sectarianism during this period, the following sentence above: "Moreover, the political struggle against sectarianism was undermined, and in fact, contradicted, by the continuation of

the organizational policies which flowed from the National Committee's 1951 decisions on the system of leadership." It is our judgment that this viewpoint represents the viewpoint of the overwhelming majority of our membership on this question, in terms of making sure that these errors are not heaped on the back of the membership alone, but in the first place, must be assumed by the responsible leadership of the Party.

Secondly, I want to address myself to the main direction before the Party in the essence of this report of the majority of the committee. On this question, I come from a state where there has been a very broad area of unity and agreement, and where I trust there will continue to be so. But I think we must understand that such unity and agreement can be brought about, not on an unprincipled basis, but on the basis of the widest discussion, out of which finally we do have to make decisions. And we cannot, unfortunately, on a matter of this fundamental nature, have our cake and eat it, too, much as we might desire to do so.

I sympathize with those of the delegates who find themselves in a position where they would like to do this, but unfortunately, comrades, political life is not always so comfortable or so easy, and for the responsible delegates to the highest body of our Party, we have the responsibility to make this decision we have failed to make clearly over the last ten year period. We must decide what is the direction our Party is going in.

We are, I know, agreed that it must move to overcome its isolation as its main task. This is not so much the problem. The problem is, what is the main obstacle to be overcome to overcome our isolation. And this, our report holds, is the continued existence of left sectarianism in the Party, which is with us today, and will be with us when we leave this convention, irrespective of the resolution that we pass. It's going to require a protracted and stubborn struggle to eliminate this.

Which is not to say that there are not right dangers. There are. I have seen them; I have even tried, in a small way, to deal with them—for example, in the field of economics. We will continue to have to deal with these questions, and the second report which was introduced here inserted a formulation on revisionism, for this reason. But we must not blunt the main direction in which we must strike our blow. Otherwise, we will repeat on a grand scale that 1952 resolution, into which all people could read all things, depending on how they wanted to look at it. I am sure you comrades remember this sad experience.

I think we have enough wisdom here to make a definite decision, and I urge that we do so by adopting this report. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* Will the members of the steering committee please come to the front?

*Steve Nelson (Western Penna.):* Comrade Chairman and comrade delegates: I missed the 1950 convention, although I was elected a delegate, because I could not get permission. The

courts prevented me from coming to that convention. Today I'm here as a delegate from Pittsburgh, but as far as the convention is concerned, I am permitted to appear here in behalf of us who are about to go on trial in Pittsburgh, to make an appeal on behalf of our cases, that is, our Smith Act trial that's going to begin soon.

In the meantime, until we come to that, I'd like to make some comments on the point before the house. I think, comrades, what we need here in this discussion is not just blind and well-meaning appeals at all times on unity, which I'm for, and I think we'll get it, but let's also know where we're going. On the first point that was reported here by Comrade Schneiderman, on the nature of our errors, unless we make clear what these errors were, it's going to be impossible, merely because we agree with the main objective, to find the right path.

It seems to me that unless we make that point at this convention clear, both on a theoretical level as well as in our tactical application, we're not going to be able to make the correction which our Party has a chance to make at the present time.

You say that we made left sectarian errors, and we say we did. Comrades, we've done that from the time our Party was organized.

Comrade Pat sits behind me here, who knows that when the National Miners Union was organized, it had a point in its program for a dictatorship of the proletariat in the United States—a miners union, mind you. When a "Save the Union" committee of the

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

173

miners was organized, it had a point that it had to recognize the Communist Party as the Party of the working-class, and when the secretary refused to accept that, he had to be removed from that position. I saw this individual the other day. He said, "See? When are you going to learn?"

Comrades, that's the issue before us. We're paying for those mistakes made in the early 'twenties, and the late 'twenties, and the 'thirties, and now we have the chance to make that correction.

Yes, as a result of discussion in the world Communist movement, and as a result of a certain loosening of certain strings that were tying us down—that is being broken down, and therefore I think this convention is going to see that we're going to fight—yes—against the right danger wherever it appears, but the main danger now has been these left sectarian errors, and that we have to see.

Can I mention just three points? What did we do in 1948? We said that the P.P. had to be organized even if the labor movement isn't in. In 1950, we said fascism was coming, when the unions were free, the mass organizations were free—the only ones that were being driven underground were us, at that time. We accepted that drive underground ourselves. What was that? *Left errors*, comrades.

And that doesn't mean that there weren't any right errors. I can mention a real lulu in 1949, when we were arrested in Pittsburgh first, the District Committee decided that the best defense of these comrades is by defending the Party, and we were left to

stand trial by ourselves. (Applause.)

[Motion for extension of time—speaker declines]

*Carl Winter*: Comrades, the presiding committee wishes to remind the convention that you adopted a special order of business to take effect 45 minutes ago. You are now almost four and a half hours behind schedule.

Therefore, the presiding committee urges that we suspend all other business, return to the special order which you have adopted, and call now for the credentials committee's report, to be followed by a report of the constitution committee on the method of election of the National Committee, after which we shall hear the proposals of the Election Committee on national leadership.

*A Delegate*: Are we coming back to this discussion?

*Ch.*: I would assume, on the basis of the adopted order of business, that you would, after you complete the other special report.

[Further procedural discussion.]

*Ch.*: We will proceed with the report of the Credentials Committee. I call on Charlene Alexander of California.

*Charlene Alexander*: 25 states are represented, with 298 delegates, 1 fraternal delegate, 26 alternates, 165 guests; 209 male delegates, 78 female delegates; 54 Negro delegates, 2 Mexican delegates, 1 Puerto Rican. The age breakdown is as follows: from the age group 18-25: 5 delegates; 26-35: 39; 36-45: 126; 46-55: 90; 56-65: 14; over 65, 5. Not given: 4. (Laughter.) The length of time in the Party: 5 years or under, 6; 6-10 years: 30; 11-15 years: 27; 16-20 years: 65; 21-25 years: 83; over 25 years: 72. Not given: 4.

[A number of the registration blanks were incomplete.]

As much as we could break it down, these were the Party posts represented: national leadership: 15; state leadership: 55; county leadership: 37; section leadership: 24; club chairmen: 15; regional leaders: 2; youth committee: 5. There were 50 Smith Act victims.

This is an incomplete breakdown of various areas of work, since it was impossible to break them all down. Farmers, 3; members of trade unions, 80; people in Negro work, 34; in Mexican work, 2; students, 1; community organizations, 27; Jewish work, 5.

The credentials committee heard and acted upon some problems and challenges presented to it. The report from those challenges and problems follows: Some delegations had vacancies because the elected delegates were unable to attend. In these cases, the persons next in line and approved by their delegations were seated. In one section of the Bronx, there were two elections for convention delegates. The second election upset the first. The two people elected from each of the sessions appealed to the credentials committee to decide which was the legal delegate. The committee voted to seat the delegate from the second election and to unseat the comrade from the first. A comrade from an Up-state New York section made a challenge of the seated delegate. The challenge was denied by the committee,

and the original delegate remained seated. The challenger was given alternate status, with voice but no vote.

There was a challenge to the seating of the New York at-large delegation. The proposals made by this challenge were:

1) The recommendation that this convention order an investigation including an immediate recount of the ballots.

The credentials committee was informed that a sub-committee of the National Committee had already been formed to investigate this question.

2) The recommendation is that pending the completion of this investigation all Delegates-at-large from the New York delegation be temporarily seated with voice but no vote.

The committee voted against this proposal with a vote of 5 against and 3 abstentions. The committee voted unanimously against the unseating of that delegation.

3) The recommendation that this Convention reject and condemn the false press reports being circulated which are a slander of our whole Party.

The Credentials Committee would recommend that the Convention accept this recommendation.

In another appeal comrades asked to be seated where there were vacancies. However, there were no duly elected delegates to those seats and



SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

175

the committee did not feel it could fill seats that were left vacant by their state conventions. Therefore the committee voted to deny the appeal.

We move the adoption of this report.

[The Credentials report is accepted with 12 abstentions.]

*Ch.:* We will now hear from Subcommittee No. 6 on General Resolutions. Comrade Kushner of Illinois.

*Sam Kushner:* The Committee on General Resolutions submits to the convention at this time a resolution on changing the national headquarters city of our Party (Applause.)

For a number of years, proposals have been under consideration or discussion to return the national headquarters of our Party to Chicago, where our Party was founded:

Whereas, ours is a very large country, and our Party headquarters should be centrally located and relatively easily accessible from all parts of the country; and

Whereas, since our Party is primarily based on the working class and the poor farmers, its main office should be located in the heartland of industrial America, and near its major agricultural areas, and

Whereas the re-location of our National Office in Chicago would place our leadership closer to the areas of basic industry, steel, auto, rubber, packing and so forth, areas

in which large concentrations of Negro industrial workers play an important role in key unions, linking the labor and Negro people's movements, as well as being closer to the major farm regions and organizations; therefore be it

Resolved: that this National Convention instruct the incoming National Committee to move the national headquarters to Chicago within the period of one year.

On behalf of the committee, I move its adoption. [Vote taken.]

*Ch.:* It is so ordered.

At this time the Chair is informed that the committee that has been working to see if they can reach some unanimous agreement on the majority-minority report is ready to report, and we recognize Sid Stein.

*Sid Stein:* We are happy to report that, with the assistance of some comrades from many delegations, we have reached unanimous agreement to the amendments to this section of the resolution. (Applause.)

It consists of three paragraphs that will precede the section entitled "Nature of the Errors," page 53. I now read the proposed section as amended:

"In our struggle for a mass policy, we base ourselves on the following Marxist-Leninist propositions: (a) that both left-sectarianism and right-opportunism have objective roots in reality—in the system under which we live; (b) that the struggle must

be conducted on both fronts, with the main emphasis against that which threatens the Marxist line of our Party at the given moment.

*"The most important mistakes made in the period under review were left-sectarian in character. These left-sectarian mistakes, in the context of sharp attack against the Party, are the main reason for the unprecedented degree to which it was possible for Big Business and its political representatives to isolate the Party.*

*"To end its isolation, and expand its mass work, the main task of the Party today is to overcome completely the influence of left-sectarian estimates, policies and tactics in all fields of work.*

*"In the process of carrying out the main task, the Party must struggle against existent right-opportunist tendencies, combatting them at all times. This is especially necessary in view of the extremely sharp turn which the Party is now making in many of its basic policies. The necessary struggle against right-opportunist errors must be carried on in such a way as not to weaken the main task."*

These are the amendments. We move adoption. (Applause.)

*A Delegate:* Comrades, I move the unanimous adoption of this section of the report. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* All right, we have the report of the committee, and it has been properly moved and seconded. Are

we ready for the question? The question has been called for. [Vote taken]. The vote is virtually unanimous.

*Ch.:* Next is the report of the Committee on Leadership and Elections. I call on Helen Winter of Michigan.

*Helen Winter:* We don't have a written out report which would have all the i's dotted and all the t's crossed, and I hope that it will be possible for me to present this in a brief and concise form and at the same time have the significance which the Committee expressed. Your Committee on Leadership and Elections met a number of times. We lost track of the hour. It was imbued with a desire to make a serious contribution, in sharply changing and improving the methods and form of leadership and system of leadership under which we have been functioning for a long period of time. At this point all I can say is that I hope we have at least been partially successful in making such a contribution. The committee wanted to, and it worked very hard in an effort to do so.

Now, first we had some general discussion on the question of the problems before us, what it was we had to solve, to improve the methods of work, the composition, and the system of leadership. And we attempted to set forth a number of guiding principles. First and fore-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

177

most we believe that the incoming National Committee must as fully as is possible express the policies determined by this convention, but that no point of view should be eliminated. In other words, all points of view should be included in the incoming leadership.

Secondly, there must be some serious changes in the leadership. Particularly is it necessary to bring in new forces in a serious effort to refresh our leadership. Now how can this be done? We are confronted with a number of very thorny and difficult problems. We believe that it is necessary to strive to bring into leadership a group of comrades that have strong ties with the Party organization and the Party membership, that have strong ties with the working class, the trade union movement and the Negro people's movement. We believe there must be emphasis on comrades from shops, comrades active in mass work and comrades who are representative of all important sectors of the population of our country.

Now we are confronted with some problems in this connection and we have to face up to them. We are not in a position where it is possible for us to nominate, elect and have a person accept a position in the National Committee who may be working in a shop in basic industry. There happens to be legislation

which is repressive in character and which does not permit them. Therefore, what we want to try to do at this convention is to make improvements far beyond what we have at the present time and to simultaneously conduct a struggle for full legality for our Party so that in the future we may be able to overcome this obstacle. Therefore, we have to recognize that while we may not be able to elect here comrades from shops or from certain important sections of our population, nonetheless we can elect comrades who have strong ties with them, who live and work daily among them and who therefore in a sense represent them.

Then we believe it is necessary to elect a cadre, a national leadership which is fully capable of making the turn which this convention is determined to make and which will make a serious effort to overcome all past errors and put our Party on the correct path to progress and in our work for socialism.

Now, there are some new features of our elections at this convention which it isn't necessary to present and discuss. I would like to call your attention to the fact that the committee working on certain sections of the Constitution will come in later on with some constitutional provisions which will take care of elections at conventions after this. What I am attempting to do there-

fore is only to handle the present situation.

A new feature will be that unlike the past there will be on the present National Committee representation from districts. That will also give the committee a new quality. Now I would like to say a few words with respect to composition. There have been strong demands, and rightly so, that there should be brought into the National Committee additional Negro comrades, particularly Negro women comrades, and that we should be refreshed also with a larger number of young comrades. This is necessary and our committee urges upon you in making your nominations to bear this in mind. We would only like to sound one little warning note, and that is that there should be serious and down to earth consideration in making your nominations, because it is possible to improve the composition so that it appears good, but when it comes right down to brass tacks it may be that these comrades are not in a position to fulfill their obligations. And therefore let's not just consider this for the sake of composition, but let's consider it also for the sake of content and for the sake of quality. And I am sure that the comrades will appreciate the fact that this is what the committee intends.

Finally, I would like to deal briefly with the question of style of work of the leadership. In the past there

has been a development which has been commonly called bureaucratic where a limited group of full-time workers usurped the responsibilities of the National Committee. Now I don't want to go into all the reasons for this here. I am not blaming necessarily the comrades who were in this position. In fact I think it would be a serious setback on our part if we would give such a connotation to it. We have had a situation where we have worked in a very difficult way over a long period of time with some members of the National Committee in jail, some still in jail, others having taken over their responsibilities, and working in various ways which in some respects created quite a crisis in this particular respect.

But what we want to do now is to guarantee that our leadership is not based upon the full-time workers, that our leadership is within the National Committee itself, with the full-time workers determined by the National Committee and responsible to the National Committee for everything they do. Now I don't know whether it is necessary for me to elaborate any more or not. I think that we should understand—I am sure it is true in all of the districts—that there has been considerable discussion on this particular question and I believe it has been fairly well thrashed out.

Now in an effort to pin down ex-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

179

actly what our committee believes the incoming National Committee should comprise, we have tried to put it in several different sections. First, with respect to size. It was considered that the committee should be considerably larger than the outgoing committee. On this there were proposals from some districts, I believe just one or two, and from a number of individuals. These proposals varied from a committee of 35 to a much broader and larger committee of 100. Your committee in discussing this matter considered that the majority opinion which had been expressed prior to the convention as well as in the committee was for a committee of 60.

It was further agreed by your committee to recommend to this convention that one-third of the total number of members on the committee should be elected at large, that is, by this Convention, and two-thirds to be elected by districts. Now, a few words of explanation. If our convention had taken place after a Constitution was adopted to this effect, we would have known about this provision and we would have made provision for the election of the two-thirds by districts to take place in the state conventions. That did not happen. Only one or two districts came to this convention prepared by a mandate of their district conventions to put names in nomination. Therefore, we found it

necessary to propose a certain procedure as to how this should be done at the present convention.

The first proposal, therefore, is that the National Committee should be in size 60 members. Secondly, this should be elected one-third by the convention and two-thirds by the districts. Third, that the representative of the National Committee from the district be elected at this convention by district caucuses, so in instances where the district caucuses cannot complete their full complement of representation, they complete it at the next session of their state conventions. Now there will be a provision made later on as to how this will all fit together. Fourth, the representation from districts for the National Committee shall be apportioned as follows: that is, the two-thirds—I had better insert here, just so there's no fussing around about it that when we say 60, we are not going to quibble over whether it's 59 or 61. We are attempting to approach a target, and the same goes for the one-third and the two-thirds: New York—11; California—5; Illinois—4; New Jersey, Eastern Penn., Michigan, Ohio, and the South—2 each; New England, Western Penn., Maryland, Indiana, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Minnesota and the Dakotas, Oregon, Rocky Mountain area, Washington-Idaho—1 each.

Now, your committee had considerable discussion about this. It is

evident that we would not have adequate representation from various parts of the country including the industrial heartland in the mid-west if we were going to proceed with respect to this apportionment on the basis of proportional representation. Therefore we attempted to apportion the representation in what appeared to us to be the most reasonable possible method, and we hope that it is satisfactory.

I have several more motions. Next motion, that this convention declare its desire to include in the National Committee comrades now on the National Committee who are now serving prison terms due to their unconstitutional imprisonment for working class political leadership, namely the Smith Act. We therefore authorize the incoming National Committee to add to its membership over and above the 60, from among those comrades, as soon as they are able to serve and express their personal agreement to do so.

Next (I'm sorry that it is necessary to put this next question in the form of a negative point, but we could not figure out how to do it any other way and if anybody has something better to offer, we'll accept it I'm sure), that at this convention we do not elect general officers.

Next, this is the thorn which has taken so much time and we believe the great majority of the committee agreed, although there were some

that did not agree, and let's see if we can work this out so that it really is understandable and we get the sense of it across. The 20 members-at-large of the National Committee elected at this convention meet as a nominating committee for a temporary secretariat of 7 members to be approved by this convention. That's the motion. Now, an explanation. When the election of the district representatives has been completed, which should be no later than March 31st, then the full national committee will meet. It will elect its permanent executive body, whether it be a secretariat, a board, or a group of officers, and at that time the temporary secretariat will be released.

Next, there is a motion to instruct the incoming National Committee to move its headquarters to the industrial heartland of our country, namely, Chicago.

Finally, we have a sub-committee which was working on the question of nominating and election procedure that will report after we have taken care of the various propositions that I have placed before you.

Now, on behalf of the officers of the Leadership and Elections Committee, I want to give sincere thanks to the very excellent participation, desire for unity, desire to make a serious effort to solve the various problems of leadership of our Party that was exhibited by all members

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

181

of the Leadership and Elections Committee.

I move the adoption of this report.

*A Delegate:* Point of information: in dealing with the question of representation, the State of Missouri has been left out and I wonder are we going to have representation or are we to be part of the Southern Region?

*Helen Winter:* There is an important point I left out. Our committee, in discussing the question of some of the smaller areas, agreed that a district organization that had a membership of under 100 should not be included in this representation.

*Mike (South):* As a member of the Elections Committee I want to correct an error which I believe crept into the report.

In the method of selection of the 40 members of the National Committee who are to be designated by the districts it was the feeling, I believe, of the majority of the members of the Elections Committee that they were to be elected by their district conventions and not by caucuses here, in the sense of the greater democratization of the selection of our leadership and also I believe it is not necessary to belabor the point. I want to make only this point that it is the sense of the committee that that is the method that would be recommended and not electing by caucuses here.

*George Watt:* In clarification of this point, there was a difference of interpretation as this comrade just reported. However, at the last minute just before we came in here a motion was

made and carried by the majority of the members of the committee that there be no election of the delegates from the districts at this convention, but that they be held at the subsequent state conventions. That is a correction of the report, and the comrade who just made it is correct. This question is before you for discussion.

*A Delegate:* Point of information: The reporter stated that this convention will elect a temporary secretariat of 7 until the end of March, I believe was the date, at which time the National Committee in full session will then proceed and the reporter said to elect a secretariat, general officers or a board. I know that the reporter was being general on the question. What I am interested in is who determines at what point, where, exactly what the National Committee will be electing when it convenes in full session at the end of March?

*George Watt:* Exactly as the motion stated. I want to correct one thing. The way the motion reads at the present time is that the 20 members-at-large elected here at this convention will serve as a nominating committee for a temporary secretariat. With regard to the second part of the question, that is left open to be covered by the temporary character of the committee. The understanding of the Elections Committee was that at such time as the full National Committee assembles, then the National Committee can then decide what kind of collective body it wants to set up to carry out its function, whether it be a secretariat, a board or some officers.

*The Delegate:* I don't want to take up the time of the committee but would suggest to the Presiding Committee that there is a gap here which should be explained to the convention, that is, how did they arrive at the decision as to whether there are general officers or a secretariat or a board or any combination of these, how will this be determined, or did this body effect such a decision.

*Ch.:* It is the understanding of the chair on the basis of the information given that it's left to the National Committee, because no other recommendation has been made, unless this convention wants to change it. This is the highest body and you can make any changes in the report.

*The Delegate:* Wasn't there a recommendation made that no general officers will be elected?

*Ch.:* That does not apply to what the Committee might do after March 31st. This report is only up until the end of March when the full National Committee will convene. Now, are we ready for discussion?

*James Jackson:* I want to speak in support of the proposition contained in the report of the Elections Committee, particularly in regard to the election of the National Committee and the bases on which the National Committee is to be elected and the composition and distribution of principles proposed. I want to support wholeheartedly the proposition that this election would elect one-third of the projected 60 members of the National Committee and that two-thirds or 40 of these 60 members would be elected by mandate of

the now-recessed state conventions. I want to support further the proposition proposed by the committee on the distribution which in my opinion is a fair distribution of National Committee members to be elected by the respective states and would largely take into account the necessities of adequate geographical representation and the opportunity for better composition.

I think that the powers of this convention are fully adequate by resolution action to allow for this form of the election of the National Committee. And I would anticipate and respond to any objections to this procedure on constitutional grounds. The constitution to be adopted as has already been indicated will be a constitution to govern and direct our conventions and our Party procedures subsequent to the termination of this convention. Therefore the rules and regulations would be for purposes of this election elaborated and authorized by this convention.

Now, I just want to speak in support of agreed procedure by the committee for the election of a National Committee and it is my belief that this procedure will be welcomed by the membership which is in the process of very fundamental reformation in the inner democracy and other aspects of the inner life and outward look of our Party, and is therefore in full confirmation with the democratic will and aspirations of the membership of the Party.

For these reasons and because it will serve the best interests of fostering unity in our Party I fully endorse this



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

183

projected plan for the election of the National Committee.

*A Delegate:* Comrades, I am also a member of the Elections Committee. I want to speak on two points. One is the relationship of objective conditions in our country to the nature of our leadership, and the second one is the question referred to on representation, Negro, women and youth.

On the general question, first I would like to say, comrades, that I am one of those people who believe that the major errors in our organization can be attributed to objective conditions. That includes all the other weaknesses. I also would like to point out that the question of full-timers and utilizing full-timers in leading positions is not a characteristic of our organization. It is a characteristic of American organizations generally, and is not an alien concept. It is a bad concept, but any of you who are in a trade union and know the relationship of the business agent to the executive board know all about full-timer usurpation of leadership. So I wish that we would recognize this question for what it is—a question of a bourgeois characteristic that has to be fought as such.

On the other question of Negro, women and younger members—as a former youth leader—incidentally in New York—I'm glad I'm out of it—out of New York, that is (laughter), I'd like to say that there has been a tendency in our organization over a long period of time to try and look around to see if they could find a young Negro woman and thus fulfill their composition. They have a Negro,

a woman and a youth and they all feel better. And I maintain that this is not a problem to be able to show people in our composition, in writing, that we have one Negro, one woman, and one youth. I maintain that this is a problem of guaranteeing certain influences on our committee, and I think that we shouldn't be afraid and shouldn't emphasize too much and worry too much that these people if they might be a little immature, can hurt us any more than we are now.

Finally, I want to support the report as a whole of the committee and end by urging all delegations not to be diverted by the fact that two-thirds are to be elected in the districts, not to be diverted from the problem that the character of our National Committee should apply to the delegates-at-large also. Because there is a tendency sometimes to say, "Well, we'll take care of it back home. It's not so important whom we elect here." I thank you.

*James Ford (New York):* Comrades, I can be very brief. I want to support the report with regard to the election of our National Committee, with respect to its democratic procedure, with respect to the suggestion for composition and in general I want to support the report with regard to the election of the N.C. And meanwhile I want to withdraw a proposal which I made sometime during the beginning of this discussion, both in the *Daily Worker* and to the National Board, with respect to the election of a Negro in the national leadership of our Party, but I must give my reasons for at that time

making that proposal. At that time I had a feeling after many years in the Party, after we had developed many splendid leaders in our Party among the Negro people, that there was a lack of equality of leadership with respect to Negro leaders, a lack of authority, and also that this lack of authority expressed itself among the Negro people to the point that many times they openly stated to individual members and otherwise that Negroes had no authority in our Party. I think they do and I think that will be respected.

I also want to say that at that time I felt, and over the period of years I still think it prevails, that we have had three crises in our Party and that these crises have affected the leadership among Negroes, and some of it has not yet been resolved. Mainly in the question of the attitude of playing one Negro against another, or groups of Negroes against another. I think that our national leadership should take this under consideration when they get down to the election of a national leadership. I therefore had intended to propose to the national constitution committee that if there were secretaries of our Party, at least one should be a Negro with equal authority. I withdraw that.

*Martha Stone (New Jersey)*: Comrades, I think that all of the delegates to begin with should appreciate the problem that the Leadership Committee had under the conditions where unlike all other committees, there was not the necessary attention and work to this aspect of the problem as we gave to sections of the Draft Resolu-

tion. So I think it is necessary to exert the maximum of discipline and patience in an attempt to resolve some problems. It is my own opinion, comrades, that the most desirable thing for our Party to culminate our convention with a feeling of unity and a determination of its personnel through the election of a National Committee, that the best thing possible would be if we were able at this convention to elect through district caucuses, representatives from districts to the National Committee, supplementing those elected at-large.

Now, I think those comrades who raise the point that the state conventions should be the place where this is done, are absolutely sound and correct in terms of the future. But for this convention I think it would be a big gap and serious weakness if we were to culminate our debates on policy without the determination of the personnel. We did not have enough time in this committee, resulting in our not having accurate enough information from all of the districts. This had to do with the status whether the district caucuses were in a position to elect. There were some districts who in the beginning said they were not, and they have changed their opinion. It seems to me that if this aspect was referred to the Presiding Committee, that given a little of time and a check with the districts, I think we would be able to ascertain this fact and resolve it. Because I think the needs of our Party require that in the election of a proposed temporary secretariat submitted to the floor to be finalized after the

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

185

complete National Committee is elected through state conventions, we would have the participation of the forces from the districts as well as the forces that are elected here at large. Without that I think it would be a very unsatisfactory situation. So I would move that the Presiding Committee have the opportunity to examine this aspect, checking with the districts in order to ascertain the actual state of affairs regarding the district caucuses and their ability to elect as much of the full complement of the delegation as possible.

*Ch.:* This is an amendment to the committee's report. We are still discussing the report. Would you hold that motion off?

*Cal (California):* Comrade chairman, I would like first to comment that I appreciate the chairman's excellent point regarding the need for brevity in this discussion.

There has been a great deal of talk at this convention thus far regarding the nature of our errors and the need for change. It is my feeling that this report, with which I am in full support, will bring a different kind of wind into this convention, a very fresh spring breeze. Because it provides a basis for a leadership which is drawn from the regions where our members are located, where they have their experience. It provides a basis for drawing in a leadership which maintains the various points of view and I hope that is the will of the convention to endorse the election of the 20 delegates at large that are proposed, but it also provides a basis for introducing a num-

ber of non-full-time people onto the National Committee who will be able to bring their experiences to the N.C., with the working class, with the mass organizations, etc. This is something we need badly at this time, because the changes we are talking about are not simply problems that have to do with whether the words are this way or that way or the other way. These changes are practical things that have to be worked out by a practical group of people with experience in the field, with contact with the masses.

I would like to call the attention of the convention to one of the very important parts of this report which deserves special consideration. This is that part of the report which has to do with the election of top leadership. You will note that we have called in the report for not electing a chairman and secretary at this convention but rather for developing a secretariat on an interim basis to be eventually replaced with officers elected by the National Committee after they have learned to work together in behalf of this program. This, I feel, is the kind of an approach which can successfully bring forward the prosecution of the program which we seek.

*Hal Simon (New York):* Comrades, I think that the amendment which I will submit at the appropriate moment, if it isn't now, will be along the following lines: that when the full National Committee convenes and releases the temporary secretariat, it is my opinion that the National Committee at that time should only be empowered to elect another group of permanent sec-

retaries and not to elect general national officers, such as a chairman or general secretary. It is my feeling that such a decision should only be made by another session of this convention, or at the next convention of the Party.

I say this is in conformity with what the intent of the committee's report was. The committee stated in its report to this convention, that even though it may be desirable, we should not at this convention elect a national chairman or a secretary. I agree with that even though I feel it would be desirable if we could do so, but the reason why we cannot do so at this time is because there are no individuals in my opinion either for national chairman or secretary around whom the whole Party could unite as a result of the divergence of opinion that has been expressed in the debate prior to the convention.

I think that's the reason why we are not electing a national chairman and secretary at this particular moment, and therefore I feel that it should be clear in this convention that because that is the situation—it will not change two months from now—that we need an opportunity to examine the various comrades who participate in the national leadership and otherwise on the basis of their political position, on the basis of program, on the basis of their activity in helping break our Party out of its isolation. And the subsequent convention, with all of us assembled, can determine then much more clearly whom we want to elect as the chairman and general secretary.

I think that an amendment is needed to the report to clear up this particular point and when the appropriate time comes, I shall so move.

*Al (New York)*: I find myself in agreement with a good part of the report of the committee, but I think it should be somewhat stronger. If as it is said here and as it is said in the Draft Resolution, we are in the most serious crisis in our Party brought about by some serious weaknesses which are mainly the responsibility of the leadership, then I believe this leadership should be completely reconstituted because I think that refreshing, adding a few faces, or shifting around like migratory workers, of full-time functionaries here and there will not solve the problem. I was a full time functionary from 1938 to January 1955 when I went to jail. And it took some serious thinking in two years in jail for me to fully appreciate how far away I had gotten from the non-Party masses and how operating in inner-Party work, dealing with loyal Party members was able to breed bureaucracy, and I believe I became a good bureaucrat. Let me just speak for myself. And I believe the most refreshing thing that could happen to our Party leaders, to strengthen them, the bulk of them, as well as to strengthen the Party, is to send them back to the point of production.

Now there seems to be a theory passing around which I call "the cult of the present leadership" and that is, people will say, "Well, whom are we going to have as leaders? There are security

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

187

problems." Well, one of the ways of solving the security problem is to take a number of good shop workers out of the shops and put them in as full-time functionaries, and have the full-time functionaries except those who are physically unable, go to work. And I think it would be very good, if we adopted an old procedure whereby after so long a period as a full-time functionary it would be mandatory for a Party leader to go back to the point of production. I believe also the past year, the serious crisis that faced the world—I think the test of a Party leadership is not how it writes resolutions or makes speeches, but how it's able to stand up in such a serious crisis. And I'm not talking here now about physical courage. But I say in the past period, especially in the Hungarian situation, the majority of our National Committee lost their bearings, and as far as I am concerned, have lost their right to be members of the National Committee.

I think this proposal about the Smith Act victims, that the only ones who have a right to be candidates for the National Committee, are those who are now National Committee members, is a violation of the democratic rights of the Party members. My opinion is that anyone that's in jail that the people want to nominate for the National Committee should be nominated and then with their agreement they can serve or not serve. But I think that every member of the Party has a right to be nominated and not just members of the National Committee who are in jail. There are people

in jail who are not members of the National Committee and I have a right to nominate them just as anyone else.

Finally, I believe the majority of the National Committee should be workers, or of working-class background, and lastly, I don't think we should fear taking the elections of the district representatives to the National Committee back to the conventions. It seems to me with all this talk about democracy, that that's the democratic thing to do. And I don't believe we should be stampeded into this business about speed. That's become more important than solving the problems of the Party. So I believe that the election of district representation should take place at their duly convened conventions. (Applause.)

*John Hellman (Montana)*: Some small districts will not be holding conventions after the national convention. Therefore, from a procedure standpoint, it is absolutely necessary that caucuses of the delegates here representing those districts or groups of districts name their National Committee members here. I gather from Martha's amendment that this will be taken care of but if it isn't, we'll have to amend it so it can be.

[Motion passed to close debate, except for amendments.]

## EVENING SESSION

February 11, 1957

*James Jackson in the Chair*

[Greetings read from C.P. of Mexico.]

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Mexico sends warm fraternal

greetings to the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA.

In transmitting the revolutionary greetings of our Central Committee to your national convention, we want to inform you that we are carrying on in Mexico the struggle against North American imperialism, chief exploiter and enemy of the Mexican people. For success in this national liberation struggle the Mexican Communist Party considers it essential to forge the greatest anti-imperialist unity of patriotic and democratic forces; to build the anti-imperialist alliance of the working class, the peasants, the middle class and the national bourgeoisie through a powerful Democratic Front of National Liberation as the basic condition for overcoming this powerful enemy and achieving an independent, democratic and happy life. The Democratic Front of National Liberation will be victorious if it is based on the fighting mobilization of the masses of the people, if it is built around the most solid worker-peasant alliance, if it marches under the leadership of the working class. This will happen if we forge in Mexico a mighty Communist Party constructed on the scientific principles of Marxism-Leninism.

Part of the historic struggles of our peoples is the great battle for world peace. This struggle is urgent and necessary because of the grave danger of the provocation of a new war by the warmongering monopolists, chiefly those of the United States. The Egyptian events and the fascist-type counter-revolution launched in Hungary under the direction of world imperialism are clear proof that the war danger has not disappeared. This danger has been strengthened by the policy of your government in the Middle East by means of the Eisenhower Doctrine, which the House of Representatives has just approved and which leads directly to war provocation. The events toward the end of last year, while demonstrating the grave danger that hangs over humanity, at the same time show that war is not inevitable. War can be prevented since the peace camp now has sufficient moral and material strength to do so. The facts that prove once again that the fight for peace is not futile impel us to organize and develop it with greater tenacity.

In the struggle of the Mexican people

for national and social liberation we are certain that we can count on the fraternal solidarity of the North American working class and people, guided by their revolutionary vanguard, the Communist Party of the USA, which will triumph in its struggle against the people's worst enemy, the brutal instigator of wars, insatiable oppressor of weak peoples—North American imperialism. We know that fighting in the center of the leader of world reaction, under conditions of a powerful "labor aristocracy" which deceives the masses, the revolutionary work of the Communist Party of the USA is not easy. This is a very difficult struggle that the North American Communist Party will know how to wage victoriously, guided by the invincible principles of proletarian internationalism, by the scientific, ever-new theory of Marxism-Leninism, which has been tested in the fire of the class struggle of the world proletariat, under the most complex and varied conditions of different countries, especially in those where, thanks to the correct use of that theory, the working class has achieved power.

Under the creative guidance of Marxism-Leninism, fortifying their internal unity and their course toward the masses, rooted in the clear-cut principle of Party life—democratic centralism—the Communist Parties that have not yet won power for the working class, such as our own Party, will emerge victorious from this great struggle and will justify historically their existence before the working class and people of their countries.

The Mexican people are confident that the Communist Party of the United States, guiding the revolutionary action of its people, will overcome the voracious imperialism of your country. When that day comes the relations of our two countries will no longer be that of subjection and plunder of the weaker by the stronger; they will be fraternal relations of equality that will greatly strengthen the deep friendship of our two peoples.

The aggressions, the exploitation of our raw materials and cheap labor power, the monopoly of Mexican foreign trade, the economic and political domination of our country by North American imperialism, will be things of the past, swept forever from the stage of history by the Mexican and North American peoples, and there

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

will flourish the new life of friendship and complete equality.

In this struggle that soon will bear fruit we are inspired by the existence of the powerful world system of socialism headed by the great and beloved Soviet Union, which marches in the construction of Communism from victory to victory, under the wise leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, created by Lenin—the party which has demonstrated its maturity and skill in the fulfillment of the proletarian revolution, in the consolidation of its fruits and the building of socialism.

Our Party has attentively followed the process of discussion in preparation for the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party of the United States. We do not hesitate to express our firm conviction that the North American Communists, faithful to the best traditions of the revolutionary working-class movement in your country, will take at this convention a decisive step to strengthen the role of the brother Communist Party of the United States as revolutionary vanguard of the working class and the North American people, developing the Party's internal life and political line in accordance with Marxist-Leninist standards, the invincible foundation that guarantees the inevitable victory of the Communist Party and people of the United States in their struggle for democracy, peace and socialism.

At a time when in all sorts of ways there have unfolded attempts of imperialism and reaction to sow ideological confusion in the ranks of the revolutionary workers' movement—attempts which have *already* suffered severe defeats—we Mexican Communists are certain that the national convention of the Communist Party of the USA will mark another step in the defense and strengthening of the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat in face of the enemy maneuvers that seek to weaken it. That will undoubtedly be a contribution of great importance to our common struggle for peace, against imperialism, for democracy, national liberation of all peoples and for socialism.

Great victories await the Communist Party of the USA!

Long live the camp of peace, democracy, socialism, whose main pillars are the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic! Long live proletarian in-

ternationalism! Long live the fraternal friendship of our two peoples! Long live the Communist Party of the USA, revolutionary vanguard of the working class and people of its country!

*Workers of the world, unite!*

Central Committee,  
Communist Party of Mexico

*Ch.:* We will hear from the chairman of the Elections Committee.

*Helen Winter:* The committee was handed a number of amendments, nine to be exact. Between George Watt and myself, we will try to explain them. There is one amendment that has to do with replacing any member of the National Committee who may be arrested or deported or unable to function for whatever reason, and the maker of this amendment recommends that a referendum be taken to replace such a person. It is the opinion of many members of the committee that this rightfully belongs in the Constitution Committee and we are referring it there for consideration for the Constitution.

There is an amendment requesting that Southern representation be increased to 4 members rather than 2. This is contrary to the motion and the committee has not accepted it.

It was felt that under the present conditions of the functioning of our Party, that 2 representatives from the South was the maximum that could be secured.

There is an amendment that general officers be elected at this convention, at least two, one of which to be a Negro. This is considered contrary to the intent of the report.

There is an amendment which has

a relation to an amendment which Martha Stone was supposed to present. There is no such amendment in our hands, therefore I am simply not doing anything about it.

There is an amendment that reads as follows: In cases where districts will not have conventions after the national convention, they should caucus here to name their members of the National Committee. It is agreeable with the committee that they do so.

Then there is the following amendment: When the full National Committee convenes and releases the temporary secretariat, it shall only be empowered to elect a permanent group of secretaries, or a secretariat, who will work under the responsibility of the National Committee. The election of general officers, such as chairman and secretary, shall not be in order until the next convention of the Party. Now, while our motion may not have been quite as clear as this, it was the intent, and therefore we are accepting this amendment. Now Comrade Watt has 2 or 3 other amendments he will present to you.

*George Watt:* We have one amendment here that this convention should end with as complete a National Committee as possible, that the state and district caucuses make nominations subject to approval by the convention. I believe that as the motion stands now from our committee, that this is contrary to the report, and therefore cannot be accepted.

We have an amendment here, a rather long resolution, to guarantee direct youth participation in our national

leadership, that the proposed 60 be increased to include 4 youth members, and it proposes 1 from California, 1 from Chicago, 1 from the Southern region, and 1 from New York. It is the belief of the committee that we are in sympathy with this amendment and we feel that the intent should be communicated through the district delegations, so that the districts when they elect their representatives to the National Committee we should take into consideration the election of youth and we feel that, however, to accept this as an amendment at this time would not be a practical way to solve this problem, and therefore we are not accepting it as a concrete amendment.

An amendment that the State of Missouri be allowed one representative on the National Committee and be attached to either the Midwest or the Southern region. Unfortunately, within the yardstick measure that was set up by the committee in adopting the system of apportionment, Missouri does not at this time come under that and we feel that to accept this would open up the door to a number of other very small districts of equal size and would throw out of balance the entire report and plan that was presented here, and therefore we are sorry to say we reject this amendment.

I want to move now that this body accept the report as amended.

[Motion to close debate. Chair rules motion undebatable. Decision is appealed by John Gates.]

*John Gates:* Comrades, I make this appeal—that discussion be re-opened—for one reason. I believe there is one point



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

191

in the report and the motion that is before you that requires separate consideration and which I believe ought to receive a separate vote. And that is, that particular section of the report that deals with the election of a National Committee by this national convention. As the motion now stands, 20 members of the National Committee are to be elected at large by the convention and 40 members are to be elected by the States at their respective state conventions.

There is another proposal before this convention, and an amendment was made to that effect, which was not accepted by the committee, that half of these 40 members to be elected by the state conventions be elected here at this convention by the respective state delegations. I believe that this is a very serious matter which has not received sufficient consideration by this body. I could speak on behalf of this particular proposal. I don't know whether it would be proper at this moment. I only make the point now that it has not received the proper consideration.

What this means if the motion is passed by you as it now stands is, that this convention will elect only 20 members of a National Committee of 60, and then a temporary secretariat will be elected by these 20 members subject to the approval of this national convention. Now I believe that we ought to elect at least half, and I believe more than half, of the members of this National Committee at this convention. I believe also that we can do this, elect at least half of our state representation here, and at the same time these will be seated temporarily as members of the National Committee, and they would still be subject to replacement by the various state conventions. This would cast no reflection upon those delegates who may be elected to the National Committee here from the respective states. But I think it would be very important that we elect here at least half and more than half of the members of the National Committee at a national convention of the Party.

Now, the point here is that I do not believe this important matter has received sufficient consideration due to considerations of time, to the pressures because of the fact that we are crowded, and so on, but I think it is such an important question that we ought to separate this speci-

fic question from the motion as a whole and vote separately upon that section. I think it would be in the best interests of the Party, if we gave it that kind of important and serious consideration which in my opinion we have not given it so far. I think, comrades, that we should not approach the problem of the election of a national leadership of our Party in such a light fashion and to not give it proper consideration. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* Comrades, I will confine my remarks simply to the facts of the procedure. The rules for the convention which you adopted and the only issue involved in the challenge to the ruling of the chair is not the substance of the question but whether or not the chair ruled fairly in conformity with the rules of the convention which you adopted. I submit that after question is called one must proceed with the vote. Therefore it is my contention that I ruled fairly in conformity with the rules adopted by this convention. That's the only issue. (Applause.)

*Parliamentarian:* The vote now appears on the motion to sustain the chair. [Vote taken.] I hereby rule that the chair has been sustained by a big majority vote.

*Ch.:* Comrades, we'll proceed with the vote on the report of the Elections Committee as amended. [Vote taken.]

201 for the report as amended; 33 against; 8 abstentions. The report is carried.

Comrades, Comrade Lester Davis from the Elections Committee, will now report on the procedure.

*Lester Davis (Illinois):* Before proceeding with the procedures outlined by the committee for conducting the elections, let me hasten to say that there are no policy questions here, that we are concerned mainly with the problem of expediting and facilitating the elections and guaranteeing a fair election for all concerned. We propose the following rules of conduct for the elections:

We propose that nominations for delegates-at-large be made by a roll call vote of districts represented with 2 minutes allowed for nominating talks. And that to the extent that it is possible, no name should be placed in nomination until the person making the nomination has the agreement of the person involved that he or she will accept the nomination and will serve if elected.

That no one who is not present will be nominated without the assurance on the part of the person making the nomination that the nominee will accept.

That after the roll call of districts the floor will be open for additional nominations.

On balloting: All nominations for members-at-large of the National Committee shall be placed on a mimeographed ballot. The 20 persons receiving the highest number of votes will be declared elected.

The Balloting committee will consist of tellers plus the subcommittee of the Elections Committee, and this committee will work out the details for control, security and the counting of the ballots.

To the larger delegations, if they so desire they may elect two watchers to assist or to watch the distribution, collection and counting of the ballots.

Ballots will be handed to the heads of delegations, and collected in the same manner under the supervision of the Elections Committee.

During the process of conducting the election, the floor will be cleared of all but voting delegates. When the election is in process, every one who is not a voting delegate will be asked to move to the rear of the hall.

Ballots will be distributed on the basis of one to each voting delegate present, at the time of the elections, with the exception of California, where ballots will be proportionately weighted to get credit for their total delegation.

Ballots will be declared void and invalid if more than 20 are voted for.

Mr. Chairman, I move the adoption of these rules of procedure.

*George S. (New Jersey):* I wish to offer the following amendment. According to the provisions announced by the Elections Committee, of the 20 highest votes being elected, it would be possible to elect a member of the National Committee without a majority vote. And I would propose that every member must have a clear majority. Otherwise there should be a run-off. Now I know that this takes time but I do not think that we should leave this convention hall without having elected a National Committee by clear majority. That's Amendment No. 1.

The second amendment is that there should also be a ruling, in view of some of the bitterness that exists at this con-

vention, that those ballots which do not contain 20 votes, whether they contain more than 20 or less than 20, are invalid, that everyone shall vote for 20 members of the National Committee.

I offer these two amendments separately.

*Davis:* The committee considered the matter of trying to guarantee that each elected member of the National Committee have the endorsement of more than 50 per cent of the convention but it was felt that in view of the large number of nominations we are apt to have, it would necessitate several ballots and we would find ourselves in a procedure comparable to that of the Democratic and Republican national conventions whereby it would require several days to elect 20 delegates.

*Ch.:* The Chair rules out of order the proposed amendment on the grounds of Rule 8 of the Convention Rules that they are contrary to the report and therefore would have to be submitted to the Elections Committee.

*Davis:* The committee wishes to apologize for a point of unclarity. We neglected to recommend that the state delegations during their caucuses discuss the matter of nominations to the National Committee. At this point they will arrive at a conclusion as to those people whom they wish to nominate. They will then be given 2 minutes to speak for each person whom they wish to nominate.

*Ch.:* The committee's ruling is that one cannot vote for more than 20. One could vote under that for less than 20.

*A Delegate:* Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask first whether the committee has given any consideration to the problem that at least our delegation has that by tomorrow less than half of our delegation will be present, because the other comrades have to go back to work, and whether they have given any consideration to the question of permitting the delegation to have its full vote and if it has, why it has rejected that idea and made the proposal that it has.

*Davis:* We considered it but we couldn't come up with a solution. If the comrade has a good solution, we would consider it. The problem is that there are a number of delegations that had to go to work today and will not be on hand for the elections.

*Ch.:* Further on that, I am just advised that the Presiding Committee has not ruled

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

193

on the precise time of the voting but they will do so shortly.

*Lil Gates (New York)*: I want to raise two questions, first, in addition to the problem that Comrade Hy raised, we have a large number of delegates in New York who are working and cannot come during the day. We have a very representative delegation and we do have shop workers. We tried very hard to get them to this convention. Therefore I would like to propose to the Presiding Committee or the Elections Committee that some provision be made for these comrades to vote later on when they come to the convention regardless of the time of the election. Perhaps something can be worked out in relation to the problem Comrade Hy raised.

The second proposal I want to make is this: I think in view of the fact that these are 20 delegates-at-large, they are not delegates from the state alone, as I understand it, that there is insufficient time to discuss these comrades. I cannot see how, on the basis of a 2-minute nominating speech for each comrade. I would like to propose that the Elections Committee take this proposal back, and also consider how they will guarantee the election of a committee which will reflect the various viewpoints at this convention. I think that the procedure as it is now outlined is extremely limited and does not guarantee sufficient discussion on this. So I would like to ask the Elections Committee to take this specific amendment back for further discussion and consultation as to how to do this in a manner giving more thought and attention to it.

*Ch.*: The Committee is considering the questions raised by the comrade, and would like a few minutes to consider them a little further. As I followed the amendments, they were not substitutes for parts of the rules proposed in the Rules Committee's report. In my opinion, they would be additions.

The question has been called. [Vote taken.] The report of the Sub-Committee on Election Procedure is carried.

*Ch.*: We will interrupt this question to bring before the house at this time a non-debatable motion to adopt the section of the Resolution on the

"American Road to Socialism" as amended. Debate was terminated on this report but voting was deferred subject to receiving in typed or mimeographed form the report of the committee.

The question has been called. [Vote taken.] The motion is carried.

*A Delegate (New York)*: Point of information: If the shopworker delegates whom we have who cannot be here—who are going to work tomorrow—will not be here at 11:00 a.m., what provision is the committee making for these delegates to be able to cast their votes for the National Committee? It's my impression that, out of 140 New York delegates, there must be at least sixty or seventy-five such delegates in this position. I think it would be highly unfair if they cannot cast their vote.

*Ch.*: If they are here at the time of the election, which will take place some time in the late afternoon, they will be able to vote.

*A Delegate*: Can these delegates who know they are going to work tomorrow cast their votes late tonight, after the nominations, and leave it with the Committee?

*Ch.*: The ballots will not be printed.

*The Delegate*: Then what provision is being made for these sixty or seventy-five?

*Ch.*: The ruling of the Rules Committee representative is that there will be no special provisions for casting absentee ballots.

*A Delegate*: Now then, we do have in New York 40 to 50 per cent delegates who are shop workers. I think it would be highly unfair to be so rigid as to refuse to make provisions for these comrades to vote when they get here from the shops. Furthermore, the delegates from New York do not receive any expenses whatsoever, and only because we happen to have a larger membership, I don't believe we should be penalized for that. I should like to emphasize the fact that this matter never came before the elections committee, and there is no ruling from the elections committee on this matter. (Applause.)

*A Delegate (Illinois)*: Point of information: I was under the impression that we came here to a National Convention and that all delegates are going to elect members to the National Committee, and that we agreed, I think, on twenty members-at-large, with delegates from all states present at the time that balloting is taken. In the Illinois delegation, some of the comrades have to go home because they have to go to work and for other reasons. Obviously, they can't come back from Illinois to get a ballot tomorrow at five o'clock—they can't vote. Our alternate delegates took their place. I don't see why any exceptions should be made for the delegates from New York. (Applause.)

*Ch.*: I recognize the chairman of the presiding committee.

*Carl Winter*: Comrades, the presiding committee as a whole has not met, only because of the state of the discussion in this convention, but the steering committee has consulted and has a suggestion to offer. If members of the presiding committee do not object, the steering committee would like to propose, in the name of this presiding committee, the following procedure: that we adjourn for caucus meetings or delegation meetings by states, for the purpose of considering names to be placed in nomination. That these delegation meetings prepare a consultative vote, to be reported out later this evening, in full session, indicating the nominations proposed by the respective delegation meetings. That a ballot then be prepared (additional nominations, of course, may be received from the floor at large) and mimeographed tonight, however late that may be. (Applause.) That any delegate anticipating the need to be absent tomorrow shall be permitted to cast his ballot tonight together with his delegate's card. That these ballots be impounded, and that tomorrow, we have the elections for the balance of the convention.

The order of business as it now stands calls for the election as a special order at 11:15 tomorrow morning. As far as I can see, that is the only reason that there is no other proposal about the time of balloting. Otherwise, it might be possible, by changing the special order, to have general balloting. However, we would have to consider whether everyone would stay as late as would become necessary to await the mimeographed ballot, or whether

we merely require that late hour of those who anticipate being absent tomorrow for work.

*A Delegate*: Point of information: I'd like to know whether in this new proposal, we propose that those delegates from other states that have to leave, and no provision has been made for it, will the rest of the delegates be able to vote for their full delegation?

*Ch.*: May I call the comrade's attention to one of the rules established by the National Committee in the call to this convention? The National Committee call for this convention, which was adopted on the opening day, provided that there be no proxy voting, with the exception that, where full delegations are unable to attend from any state, for financial reasons, that their votes may be equally apportioned among the attending delegates. No other provision has been accepted by this convention for the casting of votes for absentees.

*A Delegate*: I would like to express my opinion in favor of this proposal, for the following reasons. First of all, I think it is unfortunate that the N. Y. delegation did not arrange, as did the out of town delegations, for their delegates to take time off, so that they are able to attend the convention in full. However, inasmuch as they did not, it is my opinion that it is a mistake to penalize delegates by disfranchising them for not doing so.

It would be wrong if we exhibited some kind of ridiculous vindictiveness and disfranchised those delegates and did not permit them to participate. Therefore, I favor that the nominations be made tonight and that those delegates be permitted to vote their choice for the National Committee. (Applause.)

[Further procedural discussion.]

*Another Delegate*: On procedure: Is it possible, as a result of the proposal of the Presiding Committee, for all delegates to vote tonight? It's just as easy for all delegates to mark their ballots.

*Ch.*: We'll call upon the Chairman of the Presiding Committee, Comrade Winter, to restate the essence of the amendment which will be the subject to be voted on at this time.

*Comrade Winter*: I think perhaps comrades, we should act on these features of the voting procedure seriatum. The first proposal I would submit, therefore, is

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

195

that we adjourn to delegation meetings for the purpose of preparing nominations.

[Further procedural discussion.]

*Ch.*: You have heard the motion, what is your pleasure. [Vote taken.]

Carried and so ordered.

[The Convention adjourns to delegation caucuses followed by nominations in the re-assembled session and voting by secret ballot.]

NOON SESSION

February 12, 1957

*Burt Nelson (Washington) in the Chair.*

*Ch.*: We will have the report of the Elections Committee. Comrade Lester Davis.

*Lester Davis*: The report of the elections sub-committee in charge of the elections is as follows: There were a total of 258 ballots issued. Weighting the California ballot on the basis of one and two-thirds vote for each ballot, the Oregon vote on the basis of two to one, and the Colorado vote on the basis of two to one, we get a total of 281 $\frac{1}{3}$  cast. Charlene Alexander 210 $\frac{1}{3}$  votes; Claude Lightfoot 201 $\frac{2}{3}$ ; Jim Jackson 186 votes; Dorothy Healey 176 $\frac{1}{3}$ ; Ben Davis 174 $\frac{2}{3}$ ; Eugene Dennis 174 votes; William Z. Foster 172 votes; Earl Durham 167 votes; Doxey Wilkerson 145 $\frac{1}{3}$  votes; Carl Winter 143 $\frac{2}{3}$  votes; John Hellman, 141 $\frac{1}{3}$  votes; Fred Fine 141 votes; Anna Correa 140 votes; Carl Ross 136 $\frac{1}{3}$  votes; Al Richmond 134 $\frac{2}{3}$  votes; John

Gates 129 $\frac{1}{3}$  votes; Sid Stein 129 $\frac{1}{3}$  votes; Dave Davis 118 $\frac{1}{3}$  votes; Charles Loman 118 $\frac{1}{3}$  votes; George Blake Charney 115 $\frac{2}{3}$  votes. In accordance with the rules established by the elections committee, these comrades are declared elected.

The elections sub-committee wants to thank the comrades for their excellent cooperation and conduct of the election, and I want to state further that a number of comrades have congratulated me, but I wish to indicate that the conduct of this election was the product and the work of all the comrades who worked together to try to guarantee an efficiently run election. (Applause.)

Comrade Chairman, I move the adoption of this report.

[Proposal to declare elected the 21st highest candidate in the voting, who received one-third vote less than the 20th, in view of the fact that he is a Puerto Rican. After considerable discussion, the proposal is defeated as contrary to the rules and procedure of the elections.]

*A Delegate*: Point of Special Privilege: I would like to ask the New York delegation as a whole to guarantee this convention that it will guarantee Puerto Rican representation among its eleven members of the National Committee that it is entitled to. (Applause.)

[Procedural discussion.]

*George Blake Charney (New York)*: Comrades, I would like to speak for more than a moment, but for the benefit of those comrades who asked me to put it into one sentence, I would say that I consider this election a mandate to the New York convention to elect a Puerto Rican comrade to the National Committee.

*A Delegate*: Point of Information: At

what point will the Appeals Committee report out its findings? I make this point because I think that there are some important and basic issues that all of us are concerned with, particularly in New Jersey, and I think it very important that we hear the nature of these appeals.

*Ch.*: The Chair doesn't precisely know when we are going to get to this question. I think it's up to the will of the body whether they stay here long enough to hear this question. If you want to make this a special order of business somewhere, take it up with the Presiding Committee, if they can get it in, and if they can't, come back and make a motion on the floor.

The motion now is that the report of the Appeals Committee be a special order of business, immediately following the report of the Constitution Committee.

[Further procedural discussion.]

*Eugene Dennis*: Comrades, all of us feel very strongly about things that are coming before this convention. All of us are also extremely tired because of the sharpness of controversy on certain things which have transpired; our patience is somewhat at a breaking point. But let us remember a few very vital things. The membership of our Party, the workers, Negro people and others, who are looking with great expectations to the decisions of this convention, are expecting more progress and constructive things from us, even in these few concluding hours. (Applause.)

Our membership, and people who respect our Party, don't want answers that we got hung up on procedural questions, points of order, special privilege, etc. We yet haven't adopted a constitution; we haven't adopted our program of action, and comrades, I want to appeal to you to subordinate some of the things you feel strongly about, subordinate it in the interests of the Party! (Applause.)

*Ch.*: The motion is to make a special order of business of the Appeals Committee, after the Constitution Committee's report. [Vote taken.] The motion is carried, 104 to 87.

Can we now proceed with the report of the Resolutions Committee—Sub-Committee No. 5? The Chair calls on Nemmy Sparks.

*Nemmy Sparks*: Comrades, the subject before the body at the present time is the section of the sub-committee report that was reported on yesterday by Comrade Max Weiss. This is the section dealing with theory that was reported out by the entire sub-committee. I re-state the motion to adopt the report of the sub-committee on this section.

*Will Weinstone (New York)*: Comrades, I believe it's very difficult to do justice to questions of theory at this late moment. And one has to be indeed brave to expect that this matter can be handled fully. Nonetheless, we all know that matters of theory are decisive in our movement, and that errors of theory, errors of formulation, even if they be a single word, may lead to great harm to our movement, and that is why our movement has always preserved the full integrity of our theory.

I believe that the formulation in regard to Marxism-Leninism presented to the convention has been strengthened over the previous formulations, and I think, in this respect, the committee has made progress. I have, however, three objections still to the salient formulations in regard to Marxism-Leninism, in its application to the United States. And that is what we are discussing—the two-fold aspects of the question of Marxism-Leninism. One, the acceptance of its validity and the opposition to doctrinaire interpretations of that validity. We are also striving to achieve a better understanding of Marxist-Leninist theory in the

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

197

applications to the United States. That is also a basic task.

My opinion is that the formulations in the draft do not make clear whether, in accepting the universality of Marxist laws, this applies also to the United States. That is not clear. It is stated that they are universal, but if they are universal laws, they should state also that they are valid for all countries, including the United States. Now, this validity, comrades, is thrown doubt upon by three formulations in the draft. One, in purpose; two, the formulation that we will extract from the rich body of theory and specifically apply it to the United States; and third, that we are going to study the state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, etc.

I welcome all study of the state, dictatorship of the proletariat, dialectical materialism, American history and everything. But I want to know: are you studying it because you believe that it is no longer valid for the United States? Are you studying it because in the first draft you said we have modified Lenin's theory of the state? And I think in your formulation you threw doubt upon the validity.

Now, it is possible to interpret it otherwise, and that's just the trouble. It is all things to all men. Therefore, in my opinion, we should not trifle with the matter. I doubt that we can succeed in doing it now, and my remarks are more as a matter of warning. I have the following formulations. In my opinion, the following formulation takes care of what the committee designed. The Party bases itself on

the principles of Marxism-Leninism. These principles are universally valid for all countries, including the United States. They must be applied, not dogmatically, but flexibly. (Chairman calls time.)

*Steve Nelson (Western Pa.):* Comrade Chairman and Comrade Delegates: I believe this is one of the most important questions before our convention. I think the question that is before us has been debated in this discussion and we will have to draw a clear line just where we stand on this matter. Why is it important that we make clear just what our Party—just what this convention—understands by this formulation that has been brought here by the committee on the matter of Marxism-Leninism? The main attack against the formulation comes from those comrades who contend that our position should be strictly like the old one, in the sense of referring to it as Marxism-Leninism, and that will be enough. That's been our trouble. Those comrades who think that to have the words in there merely—Marxism-Leninism—and object to the idea of interpreting, they are delaying our Party from going forward and making a break. They are putting a sectarian muzzle on our Party which will hamper its development.

Now, those comrades who think it is enough to say Marxism-Leninism, and therefore that answers everything, let me ask you this? Did you ever take a look at the position that the Trotskyites take on this matter? They call themselves Marxist-Leninist Bolsheviks! Does that make them—that

which we want to strive to be? Does it prevent them from being sectarian? No! It seems to me, comrades, that the question of *interpreting* by this Party is a key question. You heard here a letter from Comrade Duclos, in which he chooses to interpret what this convention ought to do. And I think we are here discussing the question, is someone else going to interpret it or is this convention going to interpret it? (Applause.)

Now, comrades, I think it is time our Party grew up. We had a sectarian tradition from the days of Marx. He was able to tell the early Marxists here, "Don't just quote it as scripture; don't repeat it as we do in Europe and Germany; you'll never make progress." This was said some eighty years ago. And comrades, again, since our Party was organized, we have been plagued by the same proposition that we have copied and we have imitated, and we have repeated things that are not worth while repeating at this convention because they would make us all sick! We want to put an end to that, and the only way that can be done, comrades, is by adopting the position of the resolutions committee. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* The Chair neglected to inform you that the proposal of the Presiding Committee was that we would have two speakers for and two speakers against. We had one against and one for.

*A Delegate:* Point of information: This report was in two sections. I want to know, as a member of the Subcommittee, when the second part of this report will be given to the con-

vention—the one on our relationships with other parties.

*Sparks:* The report was not in two sections but in three sections. You discussed and accepted the first report yesterday, after that negotiating committee deal. And now this is the second section. The third section will come on the floor whenever the Presiding Committee finds space for it.

*Ch.:* The rest of the Presiding Committee's recommendation was for three minute limitation. I am sorry; I forgot to tell you that.

*Al (New York):* Speaking against, I find myself in sharp and complete disagreement with this report, as I found myself in disagreement with the reports of all convention committees. I am against this report because, in spite of some good amendments—in quotes—this report dangerously waters down the Marxist-Leninist character of our Party, and injects a strong Right opportunist, revisionist tendency, which will be destructive of all that our Party has stood for since its very birth. This destructive tendency, which I find throughout the draft resolution, in my opinion, cannot be eliminated except by the complete rejection of this report, as well as a rejection of the political line of the entire draft resolution.

While I believe our past work has suffered from certain mechanical interpretations of Marxism-Leninism, it is impossible for me to understand how this convention can obscure the fact that, when you reduce a science to something that you interpret, you are throwing the science out of the window. It is my opinion that this



SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

199

strong Right opportunist, revisionist tendency that permeates the draft resolution and the reports made—the liquidation of this tendency, the political defeat of this tendency is the major problem that life has placed before this convention. And only the defeat of this tendency will enable us to properly and critically review our work, and adopt the proper program and policy for the future.

While I fully appreciate the desire of many comrades to maintain the unity of the Party, it is my conviction that unity which is not based upon principle is an illusory unity, and that the so-called unity spirit that is being fostered here is nothing more than an effort to blur over sharp differences which, if not decisively settled, will tear our Party to pieces in the future.

*Jane (California)*: Comrades, my conviction is that the essence of Marxism-Leninism is that it is not a dogma, and that the major lesson we can learn from Lenin himself is that we have a responsibility and an obligation to interpret Marxism-Leninism in terms of the problems and history and traditions of our own country. I want to speak particularly on paragraph 3 of this resolution, which calls upon the Party to study thoroughly the realities of American life today and its history and traditions. But I want to speak against the vague, general way in which we refer to American traditions, and ask that we make a very thorough and concrete study of it. Every Communist Party in the world has the obligation to independently study and apply Marxism to its own particular,

yes, comrades, its unique tradition, and the unique nature of its own history and culture.

We have a great deal to learn from foreign parties, and we can learn from Lenin and from Mao Tse-tung and from Togliatti, and other Communist leaders throughout the world, the necessity of studying and knowing our own country. Comrades, we don't know as much about American history as we know about Russian history, and we've got an obligation to learn it. Marxism is a generalization of world experiences, and Marxism applied to the United States must be a generalization of world experiences, plus particularly those of our own country.

I would like to urge that the incoming National Committee institute immediately a real study of the history of our country, its political, its economic, its social and its cultural history and traditions, so that we can flexibly understand and apply and create our theory and move forward into the struggle of the American people for socialism. (Applause.)

*Ch.*: We have now had two speakers for and two against. Under the rules, we will proceed to vote. [Vote taken.] The Ayes have it. Four abstentions.

The report of the committee has been adopted.

*Ch.*: The next order of business is the report on the Preamble of the Constitution.

*A Delegate*: On procedure: It was originally proposed by the Presiding Committee that this sub-committee of the Resolutions Committee would report on three

subjects: the nature of our errors, theory and theoretical questions, and relations with other Communist Parties. We have not taken up the third point which was supposed to immediately follow, and unless we change the rules that we adopted on that question, that is next in order.

*Ch.:* O.K. The Chairman says he is now ready to report on the third section of the Resolutions Sub-committee on the Party.

*Nemmy Sparks:* With the emergence of socialism as a world system, it has become necessary to recognize, besides the contradiction between the forces of imperialism and the people, a new type of contradiction: a contradiction between socialist countries, or between the Communist parties of different countries.

In the early days before World War I, it was generally thought that national boundaries and national consciousness would disappear with the coming of socialism, but Lenin insisted even before World War I on the continuing importance of the national question.

As it happened, the socialist revolution was not world-wide in 1917, but succeeded in only one country. Since then, socialism has developed within national lines and in a world where national consciousness is stronger than ever. This greatly complicates the problems of proletarian internationalism.

Thus today, despite their common aims and outlook, we find that the unity of the socialist world is by no means automatic. It was chiefly to the solution of this question that the Chinese Communist Party recently devoted their excel-

lent article, and the visits of Chou En-lai to the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies.

The method of solution of this contradiction between socialist countries is the method of criticism and struggle, but that criticism must be within the framework of recognition that the fundamental conflict is between the forces of the peoples and the forces of imperialism. We were correct in recognizing this new type of contradiction, but it must be admitted that in dealing with it recently, we made many errors, either confusing the two contradictions, or failing to maintain the primacy of the fundamental contradiction. Undoubtedly it will take some time and further experience for all of us to learn how to handle this new type of question correctly, through all the maze of historical events that characterize the period we live in.

The failure to recognize the complications of the historical development of socialism led also to our uncritical acceptance of the developments in the Soviet Union, and our tendency to accept uncritically the views of Marxists of other countries. We exaggerated the possibilities of a single world view, not recognizing that it can provide only a general guide. This resulted in strengthening doctrinairism on our part, led us to mistrust the observations of our own members working in the field, and hindered the normal development of our theoretical work.

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

201

As long ago as July, 1943, the Communist International gave as one of the main reasons for its decision to dissolve, the following judgment:

"The profound difference in the historical roads of development of each country of the world, the diverse character and even the contradictions in the social order, the difference in level and rate of their social development, and finally the difference in the degree of consciousness and organization of the workers, have also conditioned the various problems which face the working class of each individual country."

How much more true is this today with the vastly greater complications of the situation! Therefore, more than ever, must we be, as Comrade Dennis placed it in his keynote "not only organizationally independent, but ideologically independent."

We should carefully study all criticism and opinions, as we, in a fully responsible way, criticize others, but no opinions from elsewhere can determine our policy.

Only those policies, which arise out of our own interpretation and application of our Marxist-Leninist scientific principles to the needs and interests of the American working class and people can be valid for us.

Therefore your committee proposes the adoption of this section of the Draft Resolution, page 57

through the top of Page 59, with only one amendment. This amendment is based on a Resolution by the Illinois State Convention and was adopted unanimously by your committee.

It reads as follows:

"New problems of relations have arisen as a result of the emergence of socialism as a world system comprising a number of national states in place of one encircled socialist country. Serious mistakes and shortcomings in the relations between the USSR and other socialist states—as in the examples of Poland and Hungary—have been revealed. Efforts are being made to correct these mistakes on the basis of a further development of the Marxist-Leninist principles of proletarian internationalism, national independence and equality. Correction of errors in relationships between socialist states is facilitated by the fact that the fundamental basis of such relations is common ideology, common aims, mutual assistance and cooperation.

"International working-class solidarity includes the right to friendly criticism of brother parties or the actions of socialist governments. At the same time it requires that such criticism shall be within the framework of recognition that the fundamental conflict of all peoples is with the forces of imperialism."

I move the adoption of this report. (Applause.)

*Ch.*: The motion is to adopt the report of the committee. We will have two speakers for and two against.

*Manny Cantor (New Jersey)*: I want to speak briefly on how the great Chinese Communist Party comes forward in the world at this critical juncture to express its international solidarity and to give assistance to the world movement. Some months back, it sounded warnings against both great nations' chauvinism and small nations' nationalism. It proceeded to probe deeper into the political lessons and significance of the Stalin period, errors and abuses, which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has not as yet adequately presented to the world movement. And more lately, we have the article to which Comrade Sparks made reference, this valuable contribution against the danger of both right opportunism as well as left sectarianism and dogmatism. And it's up to the Marxists of each country to determine which warnings of the Chinese comrades most apply to their given situation. And in some discussions, I believe there has been some hasty reading of this document, and some would view this document—and I have heard such expression in this convention—as settling the main questions raised in our discussion.

I believe that the Chinese comrades never intended this; it is contrary to their whole approach to their own problems. There are big questions and vital ones under international debate. Togliatti in the Italian party has divergences of opinion with the French comrades, while also offering them

sage advice which they do not choose on some points to take. There are differences in regard to the possibilities for peaceful constitutional transition in big capitalist countries, and the possibility of curbing ruling class violence. I think all of us want to weigh the opinions of Gomulka and the Polish Party on problems of transition and other questions, despite some French opinion that Gomulka is wrong. Above all, we want to examine all ideas, theories, proposals and advice from the standpoint of their application to this country, with a view to determine, in free discussion and exchange, what aspects—as the Chinese put it—are common to all, and what aspects are different.

Now, how does the Communist Party of China apply its position, as developed in this article? I think we can examine it by looking at the Chou En-lai tour. The result of his visit to Warsaw is strengthened unity of Poland and the socialist countries. It aided the bonds of solidarity. And one of the most important reasons that this result was achieved is that Chou did not try to pressure Gomulka and the Communist Party of Poland into several positions that would have created rifts and problems within the Communist Party of Poland, and would have weakened the ties of that party with the Polish working class and people.

And so, on the Hungarian question, their joint statement did not endorse Soviet troop action, but supported the Kadar government. So in regard to relations with the Soviet Union, there

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

203

was a variation between their joint statement and, for example, the Czechoslovak Party. It took into account the real situation in Poland. The question I would ask is, what would have happened in Poland if the Polish leaders had acceded to the opinions of the Soviet leaders some months ago? Would they have won overwhelming support of the Polish people? Would international solidarity have been strengthened? Were relations with the Soviet Union and the socialist camp improved? I think the answer is obvious. And I am confident that the Soviet leaders today are happy that they were not successful in persuading the Polish Party leaders of their course, and the lesson for us is to strengthen international solidarity to defend the cause of international socialism. We must approach these and similar questions (and many more will arrive) from the standpoint of the American workers, the American conditions, the level of struggle and the understanding here.

*Jacob Mindel (New York)*: Comrades, our discussion about the Soviet Union wasn't anything to be proud of. Just a while ago, we adopted a resolution which tells the international Communist parties "Keep Out of the United States." Now, we take freedom to discuss and tell the parties of the socialist countries what they did well and what they didn't do well. I think that the danger we are facing is making the criticism of the Soviet Union our main problem. While we recognize that the Soviet Union and other Communist parties made mistakes, we

should also recognize that since the 20th Congress, we had a declaration of October 30th, a declaration of November 23rd, and if we are to tell something to these parties, we should say that, while they made mistakes, we congratulate their efforts, and recognize these documents as a step forward to consolidate the international stand of the working class. And I deplore that we are not consistent. If we want to be opportunists—let us be on the whole line. That's what you're trying to do! And you're telling that one party cannot butt in in the business of another party. That is isolationism of the worst kind.

Why? Because the problems of the United States cannot be solved in isolation. They can be solved only in conjunction with other countries (applause), and when we put ourselves in other relations, we are only saying that we don't adhere to Marxism-Leninism.

And I propose that, if the committee sees its way to include the actions of the Party since the 20th Congress—otherwise, I propose that we vote against the resolution. (Applause.)

*Bob (New York)*: I believe the resolution is inadequate because it does not sufficiently explore one of the major factors responsible for our errors, both to the right and left, throughout our history, and that is, a fundamentally incorrect conception of proletarian internationalism. For us, this has meant not only support for the socialist countries and the workers' governments, it has come to mean tailing critically behind and tailing all our policy and ac-

tivity to the particular turns of Soviet foreign policy, whether right or wrong. We have tried to squeeze all of life into this narrow framework, to evaluate all other events, movements, organizations and individuals on this basis, and we attacked all of those who differed with us, including friends of the Soviet Union, as enemies. And this distorted concept, I believe, is exactly what Comrade Foster continues to advocate.

Second of all, by our unwillingness to support any peace movement until the Soviet Union did so, we isolated ourselves much more than necessary from the peace movements of this country. Proletarian internationalism means that if we believe in and support the Soviet Union and socialism, we must speak out against every Soviet policy, whether domestic or foreign, which hinders socialism in the world. Dialectical materialism requires that we see, not only the main truths, but the contradictions. If we ask for fraternal friendly discussion, we must point out that discussion is limited when we print all views, but Pravda refuses to print any of our views except Dennis', and censors that!

Comrades, belief in socialism and support for the Soviet Union means that we must criticize and state the full truth without equivocation on every issue. We, who do not want to blind ourselves, have, I believe, more faith in the basic strength and resiliency and power of socialism in the Soviet Union than those who quake and quiver. For these reasons, I am convinced that the line being advocated at this

convention by Comrade Foster is not only not dialectical materialism but dangerous rejection and attack on the true meaning of proletarian internationalism. (Applause.)

*Millie (New York)*: Comrades, I am very glad I finally got recognized. I am a section organizer in Manhattan, who has sat through the County, State, and—so far—the National Convention, and still hasn't gotten a chance to speak until just now! I would hate to have had to go home to my section without having had the opportunity to express my section's views on something in this convention.

I would like to read to the convention from a report adopted unanimously by the two staffs of my section and the adjoining section on relations with the world Communist parties. As much as I have time for, anyway.

"The overwhelming majority of the Soviet Union's policies have been in the interests of peace, socialism, equality of all peoples, an end to colonial rule and defeat of fascism in the world. We are proud to have supported these policies. Up until the 20th Congress of the CPSU, however, and the significant theoretical generalizations developed therein, particularly on separate roads to socialism and peaceful transition, we justified, explained or rationalized every Soviet move, and defended their policies as totally correct to all comers. The revelations, self-criticisms of the Soviet Central Committee at the 20th Congress, however, showed that, in relationship to Yugoslavia, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the question of the cult of personality, rela-

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

tionship with non-Communist socialists, they committed errors. We have committed the same errors. The Khrushchev report on Stalin, and the shocking violations of socialist democracy and legality showed that our uncritical attitude toward the Soviet Union and socialist countries had led us to the edge of moral and political collapse.

"It is not enough to say that we did not know what was going on. Other people—progressive, socialist-minded—knew, and when they said so, we attacked them as being enemies of the people.

"Unless we clearly establish our independence as a political organization, and base ourselves upon the American working class and an American road to socialism, we shall be lost. Irrespective of the magnificent contribution that the Soviet Union has made to world socialism and world progress, we cannot here in America use the Soviet experience as a model for the American working class. The material conditions are different, the historical background is different, the atmosphere of the American bourgeois-democratic revolution is different." (Applause.)

*Ch.:* We've had two speakers for and two against.

*Archie (California):* I wish to make an amendment. I ask that, in the third sentence of that first main paragraph of the amendment, which starts in "Efforts are being made to correct," I want to add, "and certain important corrections have been made." Would the committee accept that?

*Ch.:* The officers of the committee

do not object to it. They say they accept it.

*Paul (New York):* The amendment that I offer is the following: As the last sentence following what we have here, the following additional sentence I would urge for inclusion in the amendment, as fulfilling the sense of it for our Party. "In the light of this recognition, we must self-critically reject the November 5th statement of our resident National Committee, denying the central role of U.S. imperialism in the tragic Hungarian events, as a default of our obligations both to the American and the world working class." If I may speak on that, I would.

*Ch.:* You can't speak on it. There is a division among the officers, but a majority of them say it's not acceptable.

*A Delegate:* I would like to offer an amendment which was adopted almost unanimously by the New York State Convention. The amendments are as follows. The first part on p. 57 of the draft resolution, to replace the two sentences at the end of the first paragraph, beginning with the words, "The only allegiance."

*Sparks:* The committee rejected that same amendment in the full committee meeting.

*A Delegate:* In the last paragraph, I'd like to include two more words: "international working class solidarity includes the right *and responsibility* to friendly criticism of brother parties." Is that acceptable to the committee?

*Ch.:* No objection, they say. The question has been called for.

All those in favor of adopting the Committee's report? [Vote taken.]  
Carried.

The next order of business is the Constitution.

[Owing to the pressure of time, the Report of Fred Fine, co-chairman of the Constitution Committee, was not actually delivered, but a motion was passed to include it in the record of the Convention. The Report follows.]

*Fred Fine:* A constitution is a basic document. It is a statement of principles and purpose. It is a codification of the structure of our organization, and the rules that govern its conduct. It is a spelling out of the means and procedures to implement our organizational principles, and to enhance the maximum effectiveness of our Party as an organized body.

It was inevitable that out of so fundamental and searching a discussion as has engaged our Party during the past year there would emerge a new fundamental charter for our organization. Inevitably, too, consideration of a new constitution increasingly involved consideration of the most fundamental principles of a Marxist party—vanguard role, monolithic unity, democratic centralism, the Party's class character. It would be useful—if there were time—to trace the evolution of the discussion. But there is only time enough to say that as the discussion developed, the attention of our membership increasingly centered on questions relating to organizational principles and their

expression as constitutional provisions. The National Committee has received hundreds of resolutions from clubs, sections and state organizations, and from individual members, concerning these questions. The major time of many of our Party conventions at other levels was devoted to such questions.

The formidable job tackled by the Constitution-Organization Committee was to seek a synthesis of the many expressions of opinion that would embody the will of the membership. Before proceeding to the questions that occupied the committee and will be presented for your consideration, a word about the status of the Party.

Your committee recognized that at this Convention we will not be able to have the "traditional" organizational report, nor a discussion of the specific and detailed organizational problems we face in the Party today. These are important questions, but the answer to them is dependent upon the main political direction we chart and the constitution we adopt. *We propose that the convention instruct the National Committee to convene a national conference on Organizational Problems in early autumn*, when they can get the attention they merit, and when we have some experience under our belt in carrying out the policy adopted at this convention.

In drafting a constitution we are, of course, in the first instance shaping a charter that will embody *our* principles and govern *our* conduct.



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

207

But we would be shortsighted if we did not recognize that what we do affects our relationships with others. Like Robert Burns, we might well hope for the gift to see ourselves as others see us. While that is an elusive gift, it is readily recognizable that *many are* looking at us today. Thousands of words have appeared in the newspapers and journals of opinion in our country, many of them recognizing the pregnant nature of our internal debates, and the promise they give of new initiatives and advances by our Party.

What we do in our convention will have an influence on the direction of the Left as a whole, enhancing our ability, together with other socialist-minded Americans, to enter into a new stage of the movement for socialism in our country. An essential fact is that the changes which this convention will inaugurate have already—in large measure—begun to be put into practice in the very course of our pre-convention discussion.

This is recognized by many observers, anti-Communist as well as liberal and socialist-minded, who have written about our discussion in such journals as the *Catholic Commonweal*, the *Progressive*, the *Reporter*—and even in *The New Leader* and *Fortune* magazine.

Sidney Lens, an official of a Chicago labor union, writing in the *Progressive*, speculated that American Communists will “develop new forms and new approaches different from those of Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary” and that “American

Socialists and liberals, who will clearly not rush to embrace it [Communism], will be watching with profound interest.”

I could, given the time, cite other such expressions of opinion.

But if all this is being noted as significant by observers outside our orbit of influence, it must be even more important for the thousands who at one time were members of our Party, who left with no hostility to the cause of socialism, but who, for a variety of reasons, found membership and activity in our organization difficult or impossible because of disagreement over some policy or our methods of work.

The changes we are debating are also of great consequence to those in our ranks who have doubts about their continued association with our Party, and are wondering whether this convention will and can in fact answer the problems we face in a way that will give them good reason for continued active association with our Party.

Thus, the policies and Constitution we adopt can initiate a renaissance of activity and growth, which will renew the power of attraction our Party can and should have for many thousands who wish to enlist in the ranks of a socialist movement.

I now pass on to some of the specific elements of the Constitution.

First: the Preamble. What is our preamble designed to achieve?

The preamble is designed to place new emphasis on the Party's indigenous character, its native roots, its

devotion to the class character of the American working class and the national interests of the American people—and this in conjunction with a reaffirmation of the cardinal principle that there is an identity of interest and historic destiny that serve as the common bond uniting the workers of all lands. In this light, we indicate the new relationship among the workers' parties of various lands, based on fraternity, equality, independence, and mutual assistance in the form of comradely and constructive criticism.

The preamble is designed to emphasize our departure from the dogmatic and doctrinaire rigidities of the past, and to give expression to a more creative, more flexible, more self-reliant approach to our theory, a theory which exists objectively and has universal validity, but which comes to life for us and grows in effectiveness as it is applied and developed in accordance with the traditions and realities of the American class struggle.

The preamble is designed to affirm that the American Communist Party seeks no narrow partisan monopoly in the struggle for socialism, while it continues to play its vanguard role. Our party fights side by side with all who struggle for socialism and seeks to cooperate with other socialist-minded Americans in working toward our ultimate goal. Our Party, which many years ago recognized that there were various roads to socialism and that the American working people would travel their

own road, now gives a new dimension to the movement for socialism as we emphasize our advocacy of a peaceful, democratic road to socialism.

Our new draft Constitution, in its Preamble and various clauses, reiterates and makes clear that we have no room in our ranks for those who advocate force or violence or terrorism, or who by word or act seek to subvert, undermine or overthrow the institutions of American democracy through which the majority of American people can maintain their right to determine their destinies. Our Party, which has pioneered in the struggle against all forms of national oppression, national chauvinism, discrimination and segregation, makes it the obligation of all of our members to struggle against the ideological influences and practices of racial theories such as white chauvinism and anti-Semitism, and makes it one of its cardinal principles to fight for the full social, political and economic equality of the Negro people and to promote the unity of Negro and white as essential for the advancement of their common interests.

In a sense, the preamble serves as a capsule summary of a Party program. As you know, the drafting of a full Party program is a job that is still before us. The draft resolution recommends that this convention instruct the National Committee to draft a new, more comprehensive and more adequate program for our Party and present it to the Party for

discussion and action within the next year. The Constitution Committee associates itself with this proposal.

In treating the next specific issue before the committee—vanguard role of the Party—I again revert to the preamble.

The Draft Preamble describes the Communist Party of the United States as “an American working-class political organization which bases itself upon the principles of scientific socialism” and which “champions the immediate and fundamental interests of the workers, farmers and all others who labor by hand and brain, against capitalist exploitation and oppression.”

This cogently describes the character of the Communist Party and delineates its vanguard role. Since considerable pre-convention debate revolved around the question of the “vanguard role,” it is proper that we spend a few minutes on this question, preparatory to hearing the report of the sub-committee.

The Constitution and its preamble re-affirm that the Communist Party places foremost the interest of the entire working class and all the oppressed people. As an organization of advanced workers, it strives to bring a socialist outlook into the working-class movement and to heighten the political initiative and understanding of the working class and its allies in the solution of the day-to-day problems in their current struggles. This is a role for which our Party is uniquely equipped in that our program and policies

are based on the theory of scientific socialism. It is the creative, flexible application of this theory, tested in the crucible of the class struggle and enriched by the experiences of the workers in their daily struggles, which endows our Party with the ability to participate in all struggles of labor and the people for progress. With such application, this can be done in such a way as to help make the working class conscious of itself as a class, help it grasp the relationship of class forces, the meaning of specific struggles, the interconnection of these struggles with the necessary and inevitable victory of socialism.

The gross errors we committed in the past in the mechanical, arrogant way in which we assumed the role of “*the* vanguard party” as though we were the sole and exclusive embodiment of leadership of the working class—and at a time when our Left-sectarian attitudes and practices caused us to suffer the most painful isolation from the working class!—has nothing in common with the genuine and realistic position we strive to hold in American political life, particularly in relation to the working class and its allies, a position of fulfilling the role and maintaining the quality of a *class vanguard*. As a foundation for effective leadership, we strive to earn the esteem of the working class, listening and learning from the workers, participating in their everyday struggles at the level at which they are being waged.

The concrete expression of this

leadership role will of necessity be different today in the presence of a powerful organized labor movement and Negro people's movement than it was in the early '30's when these movements were much smaller in size and narrower in content. The advanced programs brought forward in recent years by many labor and people's organizations and the initiatives taken by many of these organizations on many issues pose new challenges on how we strive to fulfill our role.

In answering this "how," we must differentiate between what is our vanguard role ideologically and politically and how we express our so-called "independent role." Our independent activities — which include the projection of program, mass educational and propaganda activities, the activity of our members and organizations in the communities on the issues, our relations as a party per se within united fronts — help to fulfill our vanguard role. In this area, we must give new and deep consideration to the question of how we look as an organization to the masses of the people, how clearly and well we are able to project our socialist outlook and win adherents to the perspective of socialism, how skillfully we develop tactical approaches for implementing the strategic aim of an anti-monopoly coalition and government as an important stage in the transition to socialism, how to project demands which meet the needs and serve the best interests of the working class

and its allies in particular moments in the struggles on issues.

In striving to fulfill an ever greater role of leadership ideologically and politically, it is first of all necessary to grasp the essential quality of the Communist contribution in the struggles as they unfold in today's conditions. A resolution adopted by the Michigan State Convention describes this contribution in the following way:

In the current struggles of labor and the people for progress, led by their mass organizations—such as the daily job struggles, the fight for Negro liberation, work for peace and democracy—the Communists in these movements assist by their experience and understanding, their tireless efforts and devotion, in furthering the unity and effectiveness of these movements.

In the past, we gave some grounds for the idea that we sought "harmful factionalism" and "infiltration within other organizations for sinister purposes." This must be shown to be entirely false. The Draft Constitution (Article VI, Sec. 9) states:

"All Party members in mass organizations (trade-unions, farm and fraternal organizations, etc.) shall cooperate to promote and strengthen the given organization and shall abide by the democratic decisions of these organizations."

Finally, in our opinion, the draft trade-union resolution made a signal contribution in its examination of the relationship and role of Communists and the Party to the trade-unions

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

211

and labor movement. This resolution states:

It is not the policy of the Communist Party to interfere with, "bore from within," or to seek to capture or control the trade-unions. We reject any allegation that this is our policy. We respect the complete political and organizational independence of the trade unions and other organizations of the working class. We Communists seek to influence the organized workers by persuasion, discussion, and example, as we do any other section of the population.

Alongside of this, the trade-union resolution concludes with a listing of the reasons why Communists are needed among the workers:

For their conscious participation in the daily struggles; for their ability to help draw lessons from each battle and to help chart the course ahead—for an anti-monopoly coalition of labor, the farmers and the Negro people; for their unreserved position on the side of the workers in the class struggle; for their conviction of the identity of interest of the workers of our country with the workers of others; for their profound belief in the desirability and the inevitability of a socialist transformation of our country.

In striving to overcome our isolation from the people's movements and in once more entering into the movements and struggles on a whole variety of issues stirring the American people today, we must be mindful of our present status. This re-

quires the most realistic appraisal of our strength and capacities which inevitably set certain limitations on the scope and character of the plans of action we shall undertake and on the load of activity we can expect our organization to carry. It requires further a far more penetrating examination of the kind of tactical approaches we develop in the fight for unity on the issues, in implementing our policies in the day-to-day activities among the people, always taking into consideration the thinking and desires of the people with whom we are working. Such examination and planning must be concrete, down-to-earth and realistic. Now is not the time for grandiose plans and projects. Now is the time to begin to test in work, in mass activity, the new direction of our Marxist organization, undertaking such activity as our membership and organizations are capable of measuring up to with some expectation of progress. Among our foremost and decisive tasks is a new initiative in building the Marxist press. With a few victories under our belt we can raise our sights.

Now—to Democratic Centralism. Without a doubt, no other single question has attracted so much and such intense discussion in the ranks. Obviously, a great deal of discontent existed in our Party over democratic centralism as it has been practiced. Possibly in this field we had the worst manifestation of a dogmatic, doctrinaire and inflexible application of a principle. For that reason, a

fresh and creative approach is needed—indeed, is demanded by the whole Party.

Is our need more centralism? I hardly think so. The cry has been for more democracy. And our problem is how to expand, enrich, and deepen the democracy in our Party—while retaining the capacity to act as swiftly as the exigencies of the struggle might require, and to act with cohesion and strength.

I do not need to cite the specific forms that bureaucracy has taken in our Party. For every example I could cite, any comrade in this hall could cite another. Of course, there are—there have been and will be—individuals with bureaucratic inclinations and institutions with bureaucratic tendencies within our Party. But the question we must face is one of climate and soil which permitted such individual inclinations and institutional tendencies to flourish so luxuriantly that, like certain parasitic plants, they threatened to strangle everything about them. There is no question that we in the leadership have been guilty of commandism and other forms of bureaucracy. It is not to excuse the individuals or the leading committees responsible for such practices that we examine some of the principles and methods of organization that our Party has had from its inception.

Where did we go wrong? Manifestly it is not a matter of terms. It is, in the first instance, a matter of practice, of the content we imparted to the principle called demo-

cratic centralism. Our first concern, therefore, must be with the practices we have followed and the content of our organizational methods.

The classic objective of democratic centralism is a maximum of unity of action based on the will of the membership. In substance, this presupposes a flexible, a dialectic unity of opposites. In my judgment, there is no contradiction between the classic objective of democratic centralism and the *new departures from past practices* called for by the new Constitution.

Democratic centralism has been defined as “a flexible system of party organization which guarantees all the conditions for combining the conscious and active participation of the whole Party membership in Party life together with the best forms of centralized leadership in the activity and struggles of the Party and the working class.”

In practice, of course—and not only during the recent past, or during the Browder period—democratic centralism guaranteed no such thing. Which should prove once again that parroting a phrase and the meaning it is supposed to have is no open sesame to the solution of our problem.

By the same token, the simple abandonment of a term does not solve anything either.

We have got to get at the substance of the question—which means uprooting bureaucratic practices that have become systematized, encrusted and hallowed by tradition. Which

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

213

means guaranteeing full democracy at every level of the Party. Which means a recognition that unity is not conformity, that discipline is not obedience, that effective action flows from conviction and not command.

As to monolithic unity. Originally, this term means simply a common ideology or outlook as opposed to a mixture of ideologies. In practice, it came to mean a rigid conformity of views on all matters of theory, policy and tactics. The concept of a common ideology must be retained as essential to a Marxist party. But large sections of our Party have spoken out in favor of dropping the term because of the harmful practices and connotations that have grown around it.

Bureaucratic methods of work exact a terrible toll in our political work; they disrupt Party unity, stultify policy and work, and weaken our organization. Our Draft Political Resolution graphically placed the problem which we must attack:

Bureaucratic concepts of Party organization, systems of leadership and relations between the Party and the masses have been a prime factor in contributing to our errors. They hindered the early and timely correction of these errors. Wrong concepts of leadership discouraged full and free participation of the membership of the discussion of policy and tactics. They stood as insurmountable obstacles to the efforts of comrades in mass organizations to challenge sectarian policies and tactics. They contributed to the weakening of inner-party democracy. In many

cases they resulted in departure from from the very procedures established by their own constitution. They resulted in disciplinary actions which further inhibited expressions of disagreement. They made the life of the Party largely routine, devoted, at least between pre-convention discussion periods, to the organization of a multitude of campaigns without adequate examination and testing of our policies and tactics in actual life by our members in the shops and organizations.

These bureaucratic methods of work, system of leadership and organization have been accentuated in part by the mechanical application of certain principles of organization adopted by other Communist parties that functioned under different historical conditions.

Our new Constitution attempts to outlaw such practices. The important new provisions that buttress the right of dissent and the new methods for electing leadership and making all leading bodies more responsive to the will of the membership are historic innovations for our Party.

Nevertheless, even the best possible constitution is only as good as the life that is breathed into it. There have been periods in our Party life when the Party Constitution was a lifeless document which had little meaning in our everyday life. In recent years many of our members never saw a copy of our Constitution, and few of our Party bodies lived by the provisions of the Constitution except in a general way.

I believe the present mood in the Party won't permit this to happen again. The new constitution is the

true, democratic and thoughtful product of our whole Party, and a far better Constitution than the one being supplanted. There is a universal determination to base our functioning on its principles, and to respect and enforce its provisions. This Constitution can become a living, growing instrument in the process of making our Party more democratic, more cohesive, more effective, and better understood by the great mass of American workers.

It is in this spirit that we submit through the reports of our sub-committees the draft for our new Party Constitution.\*

*Ch.:* The next order of business is the report of the sub-committee of the Constitution Committee on the Preamble. Comrade Ross of Minnesota.

*Carl Ross:* I am reporting for the majority of this committee, recommending adoption of the Preamble, with certain changes which I shall indicate.

Your committee was composed of some nineteen members, worked at great length, and came to the conclusion that it would be necessary to submit a majority and minority report.

What are we dealing with in this question of a preamble? We are here attempting to give a short, programmatic basis for the work of our Party, an approach to which has already been established and dealt with elaborately in the resolutions of this convention. Essentially, our question is: are we satisfied with this Preamble as pre-

\* The text of the Constitution, as adopted by the Convention appears on page 335.

sented to you as a brief, conclusive summary of the basic principles and purposes of our organization?

The first action of our committee was to affirm, by a vote of 12 to 3, to proceed to act on that draft which has been before the Party for discussion these last several months.

I would say that the most substantial debate and discussion revolved around the formulation of paragraph 6, and that is what I would like to deal with in the main.

Our Committee was in a dilemma because we had no previous action of this convention by which to guide ourselves at the time we met. Subsequent to that, this body has adopted a resolution which defines clearly, in unmistakable language acceptable to this convention, the attitude of our Party toward some questions of its theoretical base, and has in fact, in one of the paragraphs of that resolution, established essentially the identical wording your committee here has. I would call attention to the fact that paragraph 6 of this preamble is worded in the language of the resolution the convention voted upon one-half hour ago, with the exception of three words. Those three words in paragraph 6 are in the third line—"generally valid" and "work" before the word "principles." It was the judgment of a majority of your committee that the addition of these three words serves to emphasize the general universality of basic Marxist principles, and to make more clear the meaning and intention in adopting this preamble.

A number of State conventions



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

215

adopted the draft as it was presented to them, but a substantial number also amended it. Apparently, there were expressed in some conventions some misgivings that the words and purpose might, in the context of that paragraph, imply some reservations as to the general validity or universality of basic Marxist principles. The Michigan convention, the Illinois convention, satisfied themselves that they had approaches which were adequate by rewriting those sentences slightly, and then adopting them, including the word "interpret." You will note that the first sentence here has become a separate sentence which, in the judgment of those conventions, expressed that thought of the universality of Marxist ideas, and then proceeded to state afterwards, in a separate sentence, that the Party interprets, applies, and strives to develop those principles. We thought this was sound thinking, and should guide our convention here.

We gave considerable thought to the question of the word "interpret," which I mentioned has been acted upon in a previous resolution. The Michigan, Illinois, California, New England, Eastern Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Colorado conventions, and a majority of the resolutions committee of the New York convention, voted to retain the word "interpret." We felt that our recommendation was in keeping with this spirit of the major state organizations of our Party.

I should say that the New York convention, while it had committee action, referred those directly to this convention.

We had in our committee proposals and motions recommending that the word "Marxism-Leninism" should be either substituted for or inserted in this paragraph. It was the judgment of the committee that our formulation adopted first by a vote of 10 to 4, and reaffirmed later by a vote of 11 to 7, was adequate and was correct to express our thought on these matters.

The issue here is not an issue of what theory the Party is based upon. That is established. The question solely is how to state that approach in this preamble. Nor is it a question here of defining conclusively and definitely all of our approaches to questions of theory. That is dealt with in our resolutions. In our judgment, the sole matter is the merits of the wording of this particular approach, in which I believe it is the thinking of the majority that we speak of our theoretical principles interchangeably as scientific socialism as the principles defined by Marx, Engels and Lenin, or as Marxism-Leninism. And in the context of a document intended to be used as a definition of the basis of membership in our Party to new members, and intended as a public statement of our purposes, we strove to find that formulation of our prin-

ciples that is most generally accepted, most generally understood, and would in such language make clear the intent of this Party with respect to the public declaration of its aims.

I would move, Comrade Chairman, the adoption of this majority report, as presented. I should add, however, that this committee was also charged with the task of making recommendations with respect to the statement of purposes of the organization, which is on the bottom of the same sheet, and appears as Article 2 of the Constitution. Your committee voted to bring before this body without any disagreement in the committee a formulation slightly revised, which we felt broadened the scope of the statement in the draft.

You will recall that the draft referred to the fact that the Party, exercising its constitutional rights and working in the electoral process, especially by projecting candidates, strives to promote certain ends. We felt that the wording of this purpose, as now projected, is broader, more definitive, and more accurate in defining the mode of operation or method of struggle by which our Party proceeds to work towards this end—that is, the purposes of this organization are, through exercising our democratic and constitutional rights, and participating in the electoral process and political life of our nation to promote, etc. I submit also

this proposition with respect to the re-formulation of the purposes as a motion for approval by this convention.

I stated, but was requested to state again, that the actions on the New York amendment with regard to the preamble were committee recommendations referred to this convention. The New York convention never did find time to act upon them during its deliberations.

*Ch.:* You have heard the report of the majority. We will now hear the minority report.

*Speaker for the Minority:* I was asked, on behalf of the minority, to make this report. But, in all fairness, I must say that this task was given to me in the last few minutes; therefore, I am not adequately prepared to make a minority report. However, I think Comrade Ross has given a detailed analysis of what has happened in the committee. A big discussion was held around the words "as interpreted" and I think that this discussion has been held in all State conventions of the Party, as reported by Comrade Ross.

However, very briefly, it was the feeling of the minority that to use the words "as interpreted" would water down and weaken the meaning of Marxism-Leninism in our Constitution. We felt that Marxism-Leninism is a universal science, used by all Communist parties. To put in the words "as interpreted" would

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

217

lead us into all kinds of misgivings, and as I said before, weaken the concept of this thing.

Therefore, I would very briefly like to present the minority viewpoint on this question, which, as Comrade Ross has said, was on a vote by 11 to 7. We propose the following: I shall very briefly read the proposed changes that we recommend.

The first sentence should read: "The Communist Party of the United States is an American working class political organization, which bases itself upon the principles of scientific socialism, Marxism-Leninism." That's the only change in that paragraph.

In the sixth paragraph, we propose the following change: "The Communist Party bases its theory generally on the democratic heritage of mankind, and particularly on the principles of scientific socialism, Marxism-Leninism. These universally valid principles the Communist Party of the United States strives to creatively apply and develop further, in accordance with the requirements of the American class struggle and democratic traditions. We propose to continue to examine all aspects of our theory. The Party must discard those concepts and policies which the experience of the world working class have proved invalid and to formulate whatever new concepts are necessary."

I move to adopt the report of the minority.

*Ch.:* We will proceed with the discussion, with the following rules, two for and two against.

*Janet (New Jersey):* For the majority report: Comrades, I believe we have an extremely important document before us. When we go back to our states, to the people whom we represent, and to the many people whom we want to interest in our Party, we are not going to be able to go back to them with a 50,000 or so word resolution which we are in the process of adopting today. We are going to go back to them with some simple ideas, with some simple documents. And therefore, I think that the preamble to our constitution, which boils down the many ideas we have been debating for three days now, becomes one of the most major contributions of this convention.

Therefore, I think the wording of this document is very important. And I don't think we are quibbling around the term "interpreting." I, like many other comrades, have sat in Smith Act trials—as an observer, fortunately—and have heard all kinds of interpretations of our theories. I have heard what the government has to interpret, and I have heard some of our own writings, unfortunately, which I think all of us would shrink from today.

I think it is very important for us to state here, in a positive and affirmative way, what the Communist Party of the U.S.A. today has to say about its program, its policies and its

theories. And it is in that sense that I am very much in favor of incorporating the word "interpret" into this report.

I will not take up the time of the convention by going into other questions, and I am fully in accord with the majority report. (Applause.)

*Paul (New York)*: For the minority report: First of all, I agree very much with the sense of the changes advocated by the minority report, and I feel called upon to rise to speak on it, particularly since I am mandated by the decision of the New York State convention on this subject. First, I would like to state that the reporter for the majority was in error when he said that the New York State convention did not decide on this question. We did not take up the preamble. However, in adopting unanimously the general sense of the draft resolution, we added three fundamental amendments to the draft resolution. I will not deal with the others on imperialism and on internationalism, but I would like to deal with and read the amendment which was adopted unanimously on Marxism-Leninism. And I think it is incorrect for comrades to avoid this convention knowing that we stated at our convention that we must build the Communist Party on the solid foundation of the American working class, that our Party must be based upon the principles of Marxism and Leninism, as creatively applied to concrete American conditions.

Therefore, I think it is important to register that there is great sentiment in many State conventions, and

among many of the delegates here, that the question of interpretation—however we have adopted it so far—does not mean that we intend to water down the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, and that we certainly do not intend not to base the theoretical and practical approach of our Party on the theory and practice of the working class throughout the world. And I think that, in the sense that it is here used, it does do away with the idea that we will only apply principles as we interpret them. But we base ourselves on these fundamental universal principles, and that we are going to make the effort to use these principles in such a way that we can further and develop the class struggle in this country so that we can build mass struggles, so that we can learn from the experiences of the working class and people, and so that we can become real, practicing Marxists, in the sense that we are identified with, that we can give political leadership to the working class movement throughout our country. (Applause.)

*Morris D. (New York)*: My amendment is as follows: at the end of the second paragraph, if the following would be put through, then I would be for the whole resolution. And I'll read a sentence or two. The end of the second paragraph. "We see the possibility of containing or restraining violence on the part of the bourgeoisie, which will do everything within its power to prevent such a peaceful transition. We believe that the people marching irresistibly toward socialism will and can by its vigilance and

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

219

strength enforce its will against the class enemy. This above all is true: we must at all times be prepared to meet the frantic efforts of the bourgeoisie to thwart the will of the people."

*Ch.:* The committee says it's unacceptable, so your amendment is out of order. Now, you're speaking against.

*Morris D.:* Against majority: We went on record in a two-pronged fight, against right opportunism and left sectarianism, but in reading all the amendments on the constitution, we find an extreme partisan effort to negate what we went on record before. And that's why I find myself against the amendments—against this amendment that is offered now, and I feel that, for the sake of living up to our pledge that we made on our vote, that we are not in a position to discuss things in a rational manner, that these resolutions should be turned back to the National Committee to be edited in the spirit of the resolution that we passed on the question of what is the main danger, and where do we go from here.

*Fred Blair (Wisconsin):* Against the minority report: I was a member of the committee, and we had hours of very instructive and varied discussion. There is not as vast a difference between the feeling of the majority and the minority in this committee as some might think.

What was the position of our State delegation and our State convention? We were against including the words "Marxism-Leninism" in the preamble,

and we also were against including the word "interpret." Hearing the arguments here, particularly the Smith Act defendants, and others who have had experience, I have come to the conclusion that the formulation we have here is the best—it meets the aims of all of us, the real aims. It was injected into our convention that without putting Marxism-Leninism in words in here, we would not be Marxist-Leninists. That was the contention. Yet the same people did not argue for including the words "dictatorship of the proletariat." We're beginning to understand, we want to get at the sense of things, and explain the sense to the American workers and farmers and Negro people, and not just repeat incantations! (Applause.)

I understand the feelings of many comrades in New York and elsewhere, that if we don't say Marxism-Leninism, we might leave the essence out. I say the essence is here, and let us not be confused between essence and words. After we have abandoned many other terms that we used to consider so precious, for the sake of explaining the sense, let's not hang onto these words "Marxism-Leninism" like a kid hangs onto a rag doll when he is fourteen years old before he goes to sleep.

*William Patterson (New York):* I think these amendments are fundamental to this preamble. And, if that were denied, I would have to ask a point of special privilege as a Negro Communist. I want two amendments, one to the first paragraph, and another to the fourth paragraph, and the one to the fourth paragraph, with the

State of Georgia already repudiating the 14th and 15th amendments to the constitution of the United States, is in my opinion of paramount importance to the Communist Party. And I want to speak on it. The Preamble reads:

"The Communist Party upholds the achievements of American democracy and defends the United States Constitution and its Bill of Rights," and I would like to add after that "particularly the 14th and 15 amendments, which guarantee equality to the American Negro." I believe that this is absolutely necessary, in view of the struggle against the Constitution itself which is now being waged in the South.

*Ch.:* The committee says there is no objection to that. It will be included. Both the majority and the minority agree to that inclusion.

*Patterson:* Thank you. Good. I'm very happy. (Applause.)

The second sentence reads, "It champions the immediate and fundamental interests of the workers and farmers, and all others." Now, I recognize that this "all others" and also the workers and farmers, includes the Negro. I recognize that fully. But I believe that in a preamble of the Communist Party of the United States, it is not sufficient to place this question of Negroes in such a vague way. I therefore want, after the term "farmer," inserted, with special emphasis in some way, upon the interests of the Negro people. In other words, I want the question of the Negro people highlighted, so that we will distinguish ourselves in this

respect from any other body, socialist or otherwise, in the United States, that would write such a preamble. (Applause.)

*Ross:* The Committee had felt that the preamble was putting a new emphasis on the whole struggle against Jim Crowism in America. However, I think the amendment is well taken, and would suggest that the sense of it be agreed upon, and in consultation with Comrade Patterson, the exact wording be worked out.

*A Delegate:* I would like the committee to consider one of the following two proposals. Either to restore, in paragraph 6, the word "cultural," or to consider the phrase reading "generally on the scientific, humanist and democratic heritage." I have the feeling that just using the word "democratic heritage" means that we are not finding the correct words for the words "total sum of human knowledge," which includes science, culture, etc., and this weakens the base of our theory.

*Ross:* The committee discussed this word, the substitution of "democratic" for "cultural" at some length, and was unable to completely satisfy all the members of the committee, including myself. I would accept the amendment proposed. It is agreed here, and by the minority reporter, that it should be accepted.

*The Delegate:* The second amendment, which I think has already been decided by this convention as well, in the resolution adopted today on Marxism-Leninism. I would suggest that we change the words "generally

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

221

valid world principles" to "these universally valid principles." The words generally can be interpreted in two ways, and it's not just semantics.

*Ross:* The entire committee agrees, with the majority expressing itself to the effect that this is acceptable, so long as the word "interpret" appears in the paragraph. It would then read "these universally valid principles."

*Ch.:* That is part of the motion. Are there any further amendments? If not, we'll put the question.

*A Delegate:* I think it is an uncontroversial amendment to strengthen the sense of Comrade Patterson's amendment by making some reference in the section on "purposes" to the struggle for the rights of the Negro people. I think it's essential, when we talk about struggling to promote the welfare of the working people of the United States, that some phrase be added in terms of struggle for the full rights of the Negro people.

*Ch.:* The Committee is in accordance with the sentiment. They figure it's covered; if they can fix it, they will.

All those in favor of adopting the majority report? [Vote taken.] Carried.

This vote automatically negates the minority report.

[Owing to pressure of time, the report of Constitution Sub-Committee No. 2, Louise Todd (California) Chairman, was not delivered, but a motion was passed to include it in the record. The report follows.]

*Louise Todd:* This sub-committee

had before it amendments to the draft resolution on the vanguard role, democratic centralism and monolithic unity. Represented on the committee of 17 were the districts of New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Alabama and California.

**VANGUARD ROLE:** The following state conventions endorsed the NC amendment on Vanguard Role: Washington, California, Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Utah.

The New York state convention did not act on this amendment. However, represented in the decisions placed before our sub-committee were the views of the Constitution Committee of the New York State Convention. A number of county organizations reported through their representatives on our sub-committee, endorsement or agreement with the NC amendment on vanguard role.

There was general agreement that this amendment clarifies the meaning of the concept *vanguard role* as distinct from the term *leadership* or *leadership role*.

A Marxist working class party, fulfilling the role of class vanguard, has a distinctive role to play in developing socialist consciousness among the working people as well as fulfilling a role of leadership in the everyday struggles.

The consensus of opinion in the sub-committee was that the NC draft amendment be reformulated to make more clear this distinction. Therefore, you have before you an amended draft which in substance does not change the general content of the NC amendment but attempts to place the question more clearly. This was felt to be necessary because some of our greatest sectarian errors in the past can be traced to wrong concepts of what the term "vanguard role" meant. In moving toward the correction of these errors, our Marxist organization needs to face up to the problem of learning better how to fulfill our leadership role.

The draft we now present received the *unanimous vote* of the sub-committee.

**DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND MONOLITHIC UNITY:** The following state conventions endorsed the NC amendment on Democratic Centralism (some with certain qualifications which I will indicate):

New Jersey (majority report, 26 for, 15 against. Minority report, 17 for, 24 against).

Ohio—in accord with the general aims of the amendment. Registered the opinion that the "substance of the concept should be retained as a basic principle."

California—"We think a debate on the term 'democratic centralism'

a fruitless one." Their resolution devoted itself to delineating substance of organizational principles guiding the organization.

Michigan—Interpreted NC amendment as "in harmony with the specific provisions in the draft constitution on the practice of democracy in the Party."

New England, Eastern Pa., Connecticut, Utah, Minnesota, New York did not act at State Convention.

State Conventions which took action against NC amendment: Illinois and Washington.

**MONOLITHIC UNITY:** The sub-committee agreed unanimously with the paragraph at the end of the NC amendment on the question of monolithic unity, namely, to drop the use of the term, retaining concept of a common ideology as essential to a Marxist Party.

**DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM:** The scope of the work of the sub-committee did not include the question of the root causes of bureaucracy in our Party. However, because of the strong sentiment on this question both within our sub-committee and generally in the Party, we wish to call attention to the section in the draft resolution dealing with this question—pp. 59 to 62, entitled "Bureaucratic Concepts of Party Organization."

The amendment we are now discussing is directed toward this section of the draft resolution. In ap-



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

223

proaching the question of democratic centralism, our effort in the committee was first of all to find the areas of agreement on which to base our action. We found that there was general agreement on:

(a) overcoming the bureaucratic suppression of democracy in Party life, for a revitalization of our Party on the basis of broadening the possibilities for democratic expression;

(b) establishing the right to dissent even after decisions have been reached;

(c) maintaining a cohesiveness and unity so that we can be an effective force in carrying out our policies once the majority has decided.

The questions on which sharply divergent views were expressed in the sub-committee related to the concept of democratic centralism. In this regard, the opinions expressed fell approximately into three categories:

The view holding that democratic centralism, as a theory and system, was the root cause of bureaucracy in our Party.

The view holding that the correction of *our* practices of democratic centralism was needed, with a reaffirmation of democratic centralism as the basic concept underlying our Party organization.

The view holding that it is not now necessary to decide the question of basic concept at this time (not

confusing this with the proposal not to use the term to describe our organizational principles), but rather it is now necessary to define in substance the component parts of democratic centralism as they apply in the American party, guaranteeing their implementation in the draft constitution in such a way as to help correct the practices of our Party and the distortions in the concept itself which resulted from these practices.

(The committee did not act specifically on the question of use of the term, on which there appeared to be general agreement in any case. The arguments for dropping the use of the term itself have been fully stated in the pre-convention discussion—because bureaucracy has become identified with the term democratic centralism; because it does not adequately describe our organizational principles in terms understood by both our membership and people outside the Party; that the substance of the principles need to be clearly enunciated.)

In view of the positions in the sub-committee, we drafted an amendment to the draft resolution which incorporated the areas of agreement, on substance of the organizational principles to guide our organization. The vote in the sub-committee on this amendment: For 10, against 6, abstaining 1.

An amendment was offered as

follows in the sub-committee—(to replace the first sentence in paragraph 2 of the amendment): “Democratic centralism provides the flexible guide to establishing the correct relation within the Party between democracy and centralism, in accordance with our circumstances and conditions. There is no single formula for establishing the proper relations between centralism and democracy for all countries and in all conditions.”

This amendment was defeated by a vote of 10 to 6, 1 abstaining.

Those voting against this amendment did so not all for the same reasons. Some voted against it because the amendment was a judgment on a question we are not attempting to resolve at this time (the theory of democratic centralism). Since the majority of the sub-committee regard the draft amendment as an expression of areas on which we could agree, leaving aside at this time any definitive action or final judgment on the theory of democratic centralism, the amendment as formulated is aimed at creating a basis for correcting practices in *our* Party.

Therefore, the action of the sub-committee needs to be understood as follows: As not rejecting democratic centralism; as not abandoning the effort to retain and implement the correct and flexible balance between democracy and centralism; as

not judging the question of whether bureaucracy stems from the system of democratic centralism; nor is it a reaffirmation of democratic centralism as such.

It was the feeling of the majority in our sub-committee that we have not had the necessary examination and debate on this question, and in the light of the international discussions on democratization of the internal life of many Marxist parties (Britain, Italy, Poland, China and other countries), this subject will be under discussion for some time.

*Ch.:* The Chair calls on Tom Dennis, of Michigan, reporting on the remainder of the constitution, and the rule here will be two for, two against, three minutes.

*Tom Dennis:* Before I begin, I would suggest that each of you thumb through all of your material and find the revised or amended copy of the draft constitution which was distributed to you this afternoon. While you're looking for that, I'd like to say a few words about the problems.

Comrades, the sub-committee of the Constitutional Committee had before it for consideration some 274 changes and amendments to those sections of the draft constitution, which starts with Article III through the end of the constitution. They ranged from as few as 6 on a single article to as many as 92 on a single article. The character of many of

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

225

these resolutions, amendments and changes were editorial in nature. The committee—and there were some that had considerable import—and the committee considered all of these. We also, you should realize, had the main body of the constitution, which contained some of the knottiest and most controversial parts of the constitution in relation to organization. On most of the changed amendments, the committee was unanimous in relation to them. There were some that were decided by majority vote.

I would like at this moment to ask the convention to join me in a special commendation to the California delegation and the California district for the contribution which they made in helping us come to conclusions that we did in relation to the draft constitution. Other districts made important contributions also, but this particular district, I think, made the main contribution as far as our deliberations were concerned.

*Ch.:* The press committee has called a matter of some urgency here. They have to meet a deadline. They want to read a very brief statement here, and get the concurrence of the convention.

*Si Gerson:* It is a wire to Richard Nixon, Presiding Officer, U. S. Senate, and Vice Presi-

dent, and Samuel Rayburn, Presiding Officer, House of Representatives, Washington, D. C. "On this date, February 12th, the celebration of the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., calls upon the Senate of the United States and the House of Representatives to help speed up the implementation of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on desegregation of schools, and in strengthening the defense of the civil rights of all the American people. This would be a proper recognition of the birthdays of these two great Americans." I move the adoption of this telegram.

*Ch.:* Moved and seconded. Carried.

*T. Dennis:* I would also like to indicate how we went about trying to wrangle through this maze of material. First of all, we divided the various articles up among the members of the committee, and gave the proposals to them, after one of the secretaries, Joe Roberts, had already divided up the main ones according to article, so that they could go over them and weed out those that were similar, etc., and they came back to the committee again considering the various amendments. Then we found that we were in such a rough stage that we decided to set up little sub-committees in order to expedite

things, and they came back with concrete formulations based upon considering the amendments, and then the recommendations were voted upon by the committee.

I would like to read to the convention only those sections and articles in which changes are proposed of the draft constitution which you had for discussion in your various districts, and then, when I finish all of these, I will move for its adoption, and throw the thing open for the consideration of the convention. I would also like to call your attention to the fact, and suggest you keep this very much in mind, that there is a provision in the constitution for referendum on any very important changes that are necessary.

We will start with Article III. In section 2, the only amendments there are:

"Applicants for membership . . . Such applications shall be *subject to* approval by a majority vote of the club to which the new member is presented." Further in the same article, section 4, is amended. You see the underlined portions are the amended portions. "Party members *three months* in arrears in payments of dues. . . . (it was originally six) cease to be members in good standing. . . ."

Now, in Article IV, that was changed from "regular financial reports" to "at least quarterly."

Section 2, this section was replaced

—this represents a replacement of the original draft.

Now in the next section there was an amendment in section 5 of the same article. "All officers of leading committees derive their authority from these committees. Policy decisions shall be made only by the respective committee. Committees and officers must report regularly on their activities to the body which elected them, or the body to which they are responsible."

Now turn the page to section 4, Article V. The only change in that was changing the sixty days to ninety days. I won't read the whole thing; it's not necessary.

In section 5 of that article, the following was substituted: "The National Convention shall elect a National Committee in the following manner: All State Conventions meeting before the National Convention shall elect their members of the National Committee to be submitted to the National Convention for approval. Approximately two-thirds of the total number of the National Committee shall come from the districts, and one-third are to be elected at large by the convention as a whole. The scale of representation to be determined by the National Convention."

Now, in section 9 of the same article, there's only one change. In the second paragraph, second sen-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

227

tence, "a majority" was changed to "two-thirds."

Section 12 of the same article, page 4. The following is the amendment: "Policy questions shall be reviewed or new policies submitted for adoption on the initiative of one-third of the members of the National Committee."

I move the adoption of the entire Draft Constitution, as amended in this report.

*Ch.:* There is a minority report which, the Chair is advised, is a very brief one. We will now hear from the minority.

*Charles D. (New York):* My minority report is that I am in agreement with the majority report on all points except the two points on which I make amendments.

In Section V, Article V, section 9, third paragraph, the last sentence reads: "Conflicting views in the National Committee on all major policy questions and arguments advanced for or against a proposed policy shall be made known to the membership." My amendment is to add this qualifying phrase: "In the form and to the extent permitted by circumstances." In the mandatory form in which it stands now, there might be whole pamphlets to be published about discussion. The member may insist on a whole speech to be published. There will be a bulletin, and they will publish excerpts, and so on. Another thing

we have to remember also is that some discussions within the National Committee are of such a nature that they should not be disclosed in the exact form in which they have been made. Now, that's one amendment.

And then, Article VI, on "Rights and Duties of Members," section 2, page 4—paragraph 2, reads in the amended copy, "Every officer and member shall have the right to hold and express a dissenting opinion on any matter of Party policy with respect to which a decision has been made by majority vote of the appropriate committee or Party convention, provided that such dissenting officer or member does not engage in factional or other activity which hinders or impedes." Now, the published draft at the respective place reads as follows: "provided that such dissenting officer or member *acts to carry out such policy* so long as it remains in effect, and does not engage in factional, etc.," and so on. So my amendment there is to restore the text of the original draft. That's all I wanted to make in my minority report.

I move that these two amendments be first acted upon as a minority report, and then, if they are accepted, the majority report would be taken up as amended by the minority report.

*Ch.:* The comrade clearly here is

trying to make a small minority report, which in effect would be an amendment to the majority report. It is here before us as a minority report, and we will now proceed with the discussion.

We'll have two speakers for and two against.

*T. Dennis:* It is called to our attention that no procedure was made for bringing requests for review before the organization. We felt to leave it like that would lay the way open for shopping around, so we felt that an amendment, which was proposed by the Jersey delegation, and was acceptable to the officers of the committee, should be included in the motion to adopt the constitution. It reads as follows (last paragraph of Section ):

"In such case, the proposed policy change desired by a club shall be put in writing and submitted to the next higher body, which shall distribute copies of the proposal to all clubs in its jurisdiction for their action."

*Ch.:* Now, if we can get this report finished, the Chair is going to make a suggestion about our getting something to eat. So. We'll have two speakers for and two against.

*Sid (New York, Up-state):* For the majority, I want to point out that, in dealing with a question such as this, there are many many hundreds of problems. The committee, which is composed of many divergent viewpoints, realized that, if it was to accomplish the task set before it, which was to establish a structure for the implementation of the preamble and the purpose, it would be necessary to com-

promise, to act in the direction of reaching agreement, not act in the direction of reaching disagreement. The disagreements were many, but there was one basic agreement among the whole committee. That agreement was, that if we were to continue to exist, we would have to exist only on the basis of agreements, not on the basis of disagreements. The main agreement was that this organization required democratization. The second agreement was that it required the pinning of responsibility upon individuals, so that the dangers of bureaucracy would be as much as possible eliminated.

We on this committee feel proud of our ability to unite, feel proud of our ability to accomplish a given task within a given limit of time, and therefore feel that the majority report as is should be accepted. Thank you.

*Glenn (California):* For the majority: Regarding this minority report, I'm not pleading for this on the basis of unity. I think something is right or wrong because of principle, and if the majority is wrong, I will not unite with it if it is against principle. But in this case, I don't feel that the Party of this country or any organization has the right to go out and tell someone to do something that they believe is wrong. I think that this is opposite to the entire moral code of human beings—to do something wrong is not in any sense Marxist.

The other reason I feel that this is bad—although that's the main reason—is that I think it just adds to the

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

229

over-all interpretation that the capitalists place on us, that we are a dictatorship, and when we say "dictatorship of the proletariat," we mean dictating to the proletariat. And this is not what I think we intend. So I would like to see us adopt the majority report. (Applause.)

*A Delegate:* Point of procedure: I think we are not concerned here with "for" and "against"—we are concerned with specific proposals. I'd like to urge that we have speakers on amendments and that we vote on each article of the constitution separately. I know it takes time, but it's only this convention that has the power to prepare the constitution for the Party.

*Ch.:* Comrade, it would take us hours to do that.

*T. Dennis:* We have a couple of amendments which the committee has agreed to include. It may meet some problem which is coming up, and therefore I'd like to present it now.

Now, if we'll turn to page 5. Section 12, to be changed as follows—and I think you will see the improved quality:

"The Communist Party recognizes the right of any member to resign *without prejudice*," instead of the way it is now. The committee has agreed to accept this amendment. (Applause.)

*A Delegate:* I have two amendments to strengthen the educational work in the Party. In article IV, under Structure, the third paragraph under Section 1, the officers should include an educational director as well as a club chairman and a financial secretary.

*T. Dennis:* Acceptable. Proceed.

*The Delegate:* On page 3, in Article IX. It says that among the responsibilities are to organize and supervise its political and organizational work. I ask that we include educational work in that paragraph, as well.

*T. Dennis:* Acceptable.

*The Delegate:* Another amendment: Page 3, section 6. The sentence that begins: "Members at large may be recalled for cause by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the National Committee, and vacancies in the post of Member-at-large shall be filled by a majority vote of the National Committee." Now, I am pretty apprehensive about this. I feel that it should say subject to approval by national convention or review. For this reason. When the districts have the right to recall members, they were the ones who elected them. This is not true of the members-at-large in the National Committee. At the same time, there is no specific provision made for review.

*A Delegate:* On page 1, Article III, section 3. The section reads, "A Party member shall accept the Party program as determined by the constitution and conventions of the Party, belong to a Party club and pay dues." I propose to add "and engage in the activities of the Party."

*Ch.:* I am advised this is in another section—the same language, almost. It's in the rights and duties.

*The Delegate:* I would like to propose that it be placed in that section.

*Ch.:* The committee rejects it.

*A Delegate:* At the end of Article IV,

the one on Structure, a new section: "Any Party officers may be removed at any time from their positions by a majority vote of the body which elected them, or by the committee to which they are responsible." This would mean the county committee, regional committee, and so forth, which is not provided in the present constitution, and I don't believe it is in contradiction to what the report has been.

*Ch.:* They have a provision in there covering it; if I remember, it's two-thirds.

*A Delegate:* To be inserted prior to Section 5. "When possible, in preparation for and prior to discussion on any major policy by a leading body, systematic efforts shall be made to ascertain the collective opinion of the membership on the question under consideration by the widest means possible. This collective opinion shall include non-Party opinion to the extent possible, and once gathered, shall form the basis of the discussion by the leading body concerned. When the policy has been arrived at, it shall then be submitted to the membership, as indicated in Article VI, section 5.

*Ch.:* O.K. What does the committee think?—The committee feels this is covered in other places.

*A Delegate:* Section 2, Article VI, "Rights and Duties of Members." After "provided that such dissenting officer or member does not engage in factional or other activity," I would amend to take out "other," as being a nebulous term, and I also want to have removed "Which hinders or impedes the execution of such policy—or endangers the

unity and solidarity of the Party," because if you have a dissenting opinion, you will not be able to say anything if someone is going to say to you, "This endangers the unity of the Party." Therefore, this is again a danger to—

*Ch.:* No speeches, please. (To Committee) Do you accept or reject? This is rejected.

*A Delegate:* In Article III, section 4, changing the length of time allowed in arrears in payment of dues, tightens up the Party organization beyond the point of reality. We've all had experience with dues arrears which run to a certain extent beyond what we would like to see. We fight for better payment of dues, but we are not going to observe this condition if it is included in the constitution. I propose changing it back to the original statement that *six* months in arrears loses good standing, and members who are twelve months in arrears shall be dropped from Party membership, including the addition, after a personal effort has been made to bring such members into good standing.

*Ch.:* The committee rejects this because they say this is patterned after the majority of amendments opposed by the states.

*A Delegate:* I should like to strengthen Article VI, section 1, third paragraph, by making the language more positive, "Members shall strive to be active"—to make it more positive by deleting the word "strive" to make it read "Members shall be active in carrying out the program of the Party, in circulating its press and literature, in



SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

231

increasing their knowledge of scientific socialism and agitating for it, and in regularly attending club meetings.”

*Ch.:* The committee doesn't agree. Now, comrades, we have heard amendments here for nearly an hour. Are we ready to vote on the question?

*A Delegate:* Point of clarification: There are two points here. Article IV, section 2, paragraph 5, says that “the state should elect its officers.” That seems to be in contradiction to paragraph 9 of that same section, which says that the states can name officers.

*Ch.:* To clear that up, the Committee wants to insert the word in that paragraph in relation to “the state committee shall name”—let's say, “such officers who are not members of the State Committee,” let's put it that way.

[The Committee Chairman reads off all accepted amendments.]

*Ch.:* The motion before the convention is to adopt the entire report of the Constitution Committee as amended. [Vote taken.] The motion has clearly carried the majority report, and removed the minority report from the floor.

*T. Dennis:* We have a motion now from the committee on the dues structure problem. The committee moves that the dues structure be revised, effective 1958, and that the incoming National Committee shall set up a special committee to study the dues question and the relation to finances, and convene a national organizational conference in the early fall to review and adopt a schedule of dues structure, in accord with the amendments submitted to this convention.

The reason for this is that the constitutional committee could not consider the question of dues structure because it is integrally bound up with the whole financial picture of the organization. As a matter of fact, the committee was informed that practically the entire income of the national organization is from dues at the present moment.

We did not feel we had an opportunity to review this prior to bringing the report in here, and therefore, we brought in this motion so that it can be done.

*Ch.:* All those in favor of the motion? [Vote taken.] I guess it's carried.

The Presiding Committee now seems to have returned to our midst. The question before us is whether we continue or we go get something to eat.

Comrades, we have just received a greeting by cable to this convention.

“To the Communist Party of the U.S.A.—The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (applause) extends hearty fraternal greetings to the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. Under the leadership of the National Committee headed by Comrades Foster and Dennis, the Communist Party of the U.S.A. has in recent years carried out heroic struggles for peace, democracy and socialism in extremely difficult conditions. The Communist Party of China wishes the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. desired success in defending the principle of integrating the universal truths of scientific socialism with the practical conditions of the respective country, and on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, consolidating the Party, and strengthening proletarian international solidarity. We wish the CPUSA to achieve momentous advances in the struggle for strengthening working-class

unity and unity of all democratic progressive forces, and for vital interests of the working people and civil rights. (Applause). We wish the American people new success in the fight to defend world peace and develop friendly cooperation among people of all countries. Signed: *Central Committee, Communist Party of China.*

All I can say is "Long Live the Communist Party of China!" (Applause.)

Now, Comrades, let me have your approval of our proposal for an acting parliamentarian in place of Comrade Ganley, who has to return to Michigan. I'm sure we all express our thanks to Comrade Ganley for a fine job. (Applause.) We propose as parliamentarian for this final session the delegate from Eastern Pennsylvania, Dave Davis. All those in favor, say Aye. Any opposed? So ordered.

EVENING SESSION

*February 12, 1957 . .*

*Bill Albertson, of New York, in the Chair.*

*Ch.:* The Convention will please come to order. Will Comrades Dennis, Foster, Ben Davis and Gates please come to the platform?

The next point on the order of business is the report from our newly elected National Committee as to the Secretariat or Board that they are proposing. Comrade Gene Dennis.

*Eugene Dennis:* Comrade Chairman, as the delegates recall, the Convention by previous action instructed the twenty members of the National Committee elected yesterday to nominate a committee of seven as a temporary secretariat. It was clear to all of us that the election, even of such an interim committee, was a very heavy responsibility, and it required very serious deliberation, and adequate consideration of a number of very key questions, such as the composition and the calibre of such a committee, its ability to help guarantee and implement the many decisions of this convention and its main political line. It also requires, as a necessary part of such an undertaking, that it provide a collective, and that it would at least make a start to establish a team, even if it is only temporarily constituted—a team to blend some of the old in the leadership and a number of comrades who have not heretofore worked in the center. And also in this team, to guarantee that it represents different points of view, but that it should be so constituted that it will not be paralyzed with this work, that it can get down to and on with the work, both in terms of internal problems and making a beginning in helping the entire Party move in the direction of mass activity, and a committee, of course, pledged to carry out the decisions of this convention.

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

233

The comrades of the National Committee met, as you well know, under considerable duress—the time factor, and the problems and the strains with which all of us are confronted during the closing hours of the convention. The twenty members of the National Committee felt that more time was required, impossible in the few hours at our disposal, to cope with the weighty problem that you confronted us with. We didn't have sufficient time to go into considering all the duties, the functioning and the responsibility of a temporary secretariat, nor to get into at least some evaluation of the work of the proposed members for such a committee, as well as a preliminary consideration of what their individual responsibilities would be in such a collective.

Confronted with this situation, and we understand that the convention was desirous of terminating its sessions as quickly as possible, we came up with an alternative proposal, one which we believe is in the spirit of the motion adopted on this question, an alternative which we believe has many merits in its own right, and one which will go a considerable way towards meeting what the convention desired, in respect to the establishment of a temporary secretariat.

Therefore, comrades, I present the proposal unanimously adopted by all members—all twenty members of the

National Committee—which reads as follows:

“That a National Administrative Committee be set up, charged with the responsibility of implementing the decisions of the convention between now and the first full meeting of the National Committee after the State Conventions;

“That this National Administrative Committee shall consist of all resident members of the twenty elected members of the National Committee;

“That these shall work in the closest consultation with all other elected National Committee members, who shall be polled on all major policy questions; and

“That at the first meeting of the full National Committee, which shall follow upon the completion of the recessed State Conventions, the National Committee shall elect a Board, a Secretariat, or other such committee as may be necessary.”

This would then mean concretely the following: The temporary National Administrative Committee would be composed of the following comrades: George Charney, Benjamin Davis, Eugene Dennis, Earl Durham, Fred Fine, Bill Foster, John Gates, James Jackson, Charles Loman, Sid Stein and Doxey Wilkerson. If this proposal is accepted, it would enable this temporary National Administrative Committee to consult closely and work in col-

laboration with all members of the National Committee including those as far west as California, and additionally, it would make possible for the Administrative Committee to involve directly and in frequent meetings, Comrades Claude Lightfoot, Carl Ross, Carl Winter, and Dave Davis.

I repeat, Comrades, it is the unanimous opinion and the earnest desire of the twenty comrades of the National Committee that you act upon this favorably. We are of the opinion that it is in the spirit of the motion previously adopted by the convention, that at this particular moment, it will provide a broader representation than is presently possible in a committee of seven, that the comrades enumerated above as a collective and working together, will be qualified to cope with the needs and problems of a national center pending the election and action of the full National Committee, which will be toward the end of March, and we believe that this committee and its members are cognizant in a new way, personally and in the beginning of a new collective approach to the problems of making a new and a serious and a resolute effort to achieve and to strengthen the unity of the Party on the basis of the decisions and the political line of this convention.

Comrades, I move the adoption of the recommendation of the twenty

members of the National Committee.

*Ch.:* The chair recognizes Comrade Ben Davis to speak on the motion.

*Ben Davis:* Comrades, let me express my support of the proposal and say a few words in addition. Our convention is coming to an end. I think it has been a very constructive and fruitful convention. It is hammering out a line; it is reaffirming our Party, to break its isolation, to build our Party; it is adopting the main line of the Draft Resolution which has been hammered out here, and it is now, with Comrade Dennis' proposal, electing—I hope it will be accepted—a collective leadership.

Let me say, comrades, that this has been a great contribution to the unity of our Party, that this contribution comes, in its biggest part, from the membership of our Party as a whole, and from the delegates to this convention acting as a united body, and with a will for unity.

Let me say, comrades, that I support the line of our Party adopted here, that I shall fight for it, and fight for it in the spirit of the unity which expresses the will of this convention.

Now let me say also, comrades, that I think that the degree to which there has been factions or groupings or circles of any kind in our Party—let's have an end to these now! (Applause.) And I assure you, comrades, that I shall fight in that spirit, and that I shall do everything possible to see that any such process in our Party, which is un-Marxist, un-Leninist, and

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

235

certainly wrong in the spirit of our Party and achievement, I'll see that that does not happen.

We still have differences, comrades, and we have to realize that these differences are still to be fought out, fought out in our Party's getting back to work and cementing its ties with masses of people, and fought out internally on the basis of the spirit of unity and line and collective leadership, which I am sure that this convention is going to adopt. And that, in this spirit, we now have a real basis upon which we can have an exchange of comradely opinion, and fight out whatever sharp differences we have in our Party, and really become experienced in this new democracy which must infuse our whole Party.

It is in that spirit, comrades, that I want to urge the adoption of the proposal of Comrade Dennis, and that we should end this convention on such a high note of spirit and militancy and newness and change and unity as will guarantee that, in the coming weeks and months, our Party will be a big and powerful and important force in American life. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* The Chair recognizes Comrade Gates.

*John Gates:* We have expressed—all of us, many different points of view at this convention. Some of us have lost out on these points of view, but no matter who lost, the Party has won. (Applause.) This has really been a new kind of convention for our Party. Not only in the manner in which it has been conducted, in the quality of this discussion, but above all, in the pro-

gram and policies that we have adopted. This program, in my opinion, is genuinely a historic one, and one which has had and is having and will have an enormous impact on our country. In fact, I do not recall a convention of our Party which has had such an impact on the country as this one. I consider that the program which we have adopted is an historic one because of the decisions we have adopted, and the approaches we have developed towards a better understanding of our Marxist theory, to help us to do away, once and for all, with the old approach toward our theory that made of it a straitjacket and to really use our theory as the science that it is, which will liberate our minds and free us to do what is necessary to free the American workers from capitalist exploitation and to achieve socialism.

I believe we have made history in the new approach that we have decided upon with respect to international working-class and Communist solidarity, and that the best way that we can promote this international solidarity is on the basis of a program that is in the true interests of the American workers and nation, and one in which our relations toward other Communist parties and countries is one of fraternal criticism and equality.

Lastly, I think this has been an historic convention because, for the first time, since we began to develop a program along these lines, a convention of the Communist Party has officially adopted a program for an American road to socialism, along the lines

of a peaceful, constitutional struggle for socialism in our country.

I think, therefore, because of this kind of a program that we have developed and adopted, we have laid the basis for the unity of our Party. Not a unity in which there does not continue to be differences, but in which we are beginning to develop an atmosphere where we can discuss these differences with tolerance toward each other and mutual respect for each other's ideas.

I look now, as a result of this convention, with full confidence to the future, and I believe that we have adopted a program which will enable us to earn the confidence of the American workers and the nation. And it is because of this that I second and support the motion made here by Comrade Dennis and urge its unanimous adoption by this convention. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* The Chair recognizes Comrade Foster.

*William Z. Foster:* Comrades, I, too, want to support this recommendation. I think it is the best we can do under the circumstances, which are quite difficult, of course. And I, too, want to support the general work of this convention.

Over the past months, our Party has confronted a whole series of very serious problems, and these have called upon us for our best knowledge of Marxism-Leninism in working them out. And during the course of this discussion, something has happened which has never happened before in the history of the Communist Party,

and that is the tremendous role that has been taken by the rank and file of the Party in the districts in solving many of these problems. (Applause.) All sorts of questions—I could name a dozen of them offhand—that have been solved, and some of them of the most basic character, have been solved by the discussion that has been carried on in the *Daily Worker* and other papers.

Now this Convention here is a continuation of this same healthy process. I think everybody will agree, especially comrades who have been at previous conventions of the Party, that this has been primarily a rank and file convention. The officials of the Party, as far as I have been able to gather, have had not so much to say as we have had in previous conventions, I can assure you.

Now, comrades, the process of this convention, it seems to me, has not reversed what has been taking place through all these months of discussion in solving these various problems, but has continued this process, and brought us to a climax in the general line and the various documents that have been produced by the convention. And I must say that I have voted for every one of these documents, that I have been present when they were adopted, and so far as I know, there were no others that I would vote against.

The work of this convention, it seems to me we have got to understand it, as Johnny said, as a victory for the Party, and not a victory for any particular group or faction in the Party. (Applause.) Comrades, we have

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

been passing through a very severe test in every respect, and it would be silly on our part to say that we have resolved all the differences that exist in the Party and amongst the leadership. But I think we have done one thing, and that is, we have solved some of the biggest of these problems in this convention, and we have laid the groundwork for the solving of more of them.

Comrades, as I said in the opening of this convention, the bourgeoisie of this country was sure that we were going to split our Party in this convention. Well, we just didn't do it! (Applause.) On the contrary, we have laid the basis for unity, and comrades, if we act as Communists should, my opinion is that we should be able to develop this unity from the point we have arrived at here, and go forward with the re-building of our Party.

I want to say again, as I said at the beginning, this is the Communist Party that you're dealing with; this is not an ordinary party; this is the party of socialism. And we must understand it as such. And we must cherish this party. And no matter how sharply we may struggle amongst ourselves, we must always bear in mind the unity of the Party. There is nothing more precious than the unity of our Party, for without that, we have nothing! (Applause.)

*Ch.:* Further on the motion?

*William Mandel (New York):* I'd like to speak against the motion.

*Ch.:* Speak.

*Mandel:* For the most serious political reasons. This convention has only

advanced far enough toward independence to make the Party useful to the Voice of America as a stick with which to beat Communist Parties abroad. It has not advanced far enough to be acceptable to the American working class or to the American people at large. This was put in simplest words the other evening by an industrial worker here, in rejecting nomination to the National Committee offered by the Gates group. He said that he wanted to spend his time fighting the capitalist system, not fighting communism.

*Ch.:* Comrade Mandel, are you speaking on the motion that was made by Comrade Dennis?

*Mandel:* I am speaking for rejection of the motion to accept this Board as proposed by Comrade Dennis.

*Ch.:* O.K., continue. Complete your three minutes.

*Mandel:* This convention, having patched up unity between two irreconcilable viewpoints, has failed in what appears to be its very success. The full independent element will be the distinct minority in the full National Committee of the Party. This is because the most convinced adherents of the Gates viewpoint will not reappear at the reconvened State Conventions to vote for New York's eleven members of the National Committee, and the same thing will happen elsewhere. Of my section's delegation to the State Convention, there were five all-out supporters of the Gates position. One, an effective seven-day-a-week community worker in the Party force, refused even to attend the State Convention when the compromise pol-

icy of the Gates leaders became clear, and has left the Party.

I am trying to explain why I am against this, and I hope that the comrades will not take the few minutes—

*Ch.:* We will have order! Will you complete your remarks, please?

*Mandel:* Thank you, comrade. Two more of these five left after the State Convention. Thus, after the constitution of the full new National Committee, the Foster-Dennis forces will be in full command. These two men have lost all possibility of respect of this Party. Among the people from whom I spring—the Jewish people—when they didn't open their mouths against the contemptuous and chauvinistic action of *Pravda* in deleting from Dennis' article on the Stalin cult his words on the extermination of Jewish cultural figures. The American people will never regard as independent a Party marked in the slightest degree by the presence of such leaders, or by half-way statements on such policies, if that is the future assured by this convention. I believe that the Gates views contain a potential as great for America as those of Gomulka for Polish and world socialism. I believe that an organization founded on those views could, even today, and under conditions of prosperity, win a hearing for socialism among the workers, Negroes of all classes—

*Ch.:* Your time is up, Comrade Mandel. Be seated.

*A Delegate:* I want to speak in support of the motion. I feel we have had a very good discussion from two different points of view, which is the correct

Communist way of finding out where we stand, having our differences out openly, and then coming together on a synthesized program of action. I want to support the motion before the house, and I am very happy if we can go out of here united, all of us.

I am proud of the work of the rank and file in this convention as well as all over the country. I think we have had some wonderful work done by our leadership also, in preparing this convention—the technical preparation as well as the thinking that has gone into the documents which have been laid before us for us to tear apart or leave as is. And we have done our best. I think we have done a good job. We still have problems. We still have a lot of things to iron out. We still have personal differences. But those must be subordinated, and we must go out of here as Comrades, friends, co-workers, all over the country together, and show the imperialists that we can not be destroyed in America. (Applause.)

*Helen Winter (Michigan):* I want to appeal to the delegates of this convention to use some common sense and sober judgment. Now, I believe that when a committee of this character comes out on the convention floor with a unanimous recommendation, we should give very serious thought to reconsidering our former decisions and adopt a decision that they have suggested to us.

There seems to be considerable apprehension among some comrades as to the sincerity or the honesty or the integrity of this proposal, and I would



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

239

like to allay all fears by just stating a few facts.

Yesterday, in adopting your leadership and election committee's recommendation, I am sure that you all understood that this committee of 20 is only one-third of our total National Committee to be finally constituted no later than March 31st. Secondly, I am sure you all understood that, whatever temporary secretariat comes from this committee, it also will only be in operation until the full meeting of the National Committee, no later than March 31st. Therefore, it seems to me that, if the committee was able to achieve a unanimous agreement, we should do nothing more than approve the report of this committee unanimously. And I would like to so suggest. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* The question has been called. [Vote taken.] Carried and so ordered.

We will now vote on the report of the committee. All in favor of the report of the committee as delivered by Comrade Dennis? [Vote taken.] It is carried and so ordered.

*Ch.:* The next point on the order of business is the continuation of the trade union report. Comrade Winter recognized.

*Carl Winter:* In order that we may conclude the business of this convention, and in light of the decisions you have just taken, particularly on the basis of the unanimous action, which declares confidence in the capacity of our Party leadership to execute the mandates of this convention, the presiding committee proposes that all the material relating to the trade union resolution, all proposed amendments, and all as yet undelivered remarks relative to that report which delegates may care to prepare in writing, shall be turned over to the National Committee for study for preparation of the

final trade union resolution which as quickly as possible shall be made available to the Party membership. I so move.

[The motion is carried.]

*Ch.:* Comrades, the presiding committee chairman has asked me to recommend that this convention send its greetings to one of our oldest trade union comrades, who was one of our leaders in the Party's trade union work, and at one time was a leader of the workers in the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. This comrade would be present if it were not a matter of her health. This comrade has also, I believe, up until the 1945 convention, when her health failed her, for many years been a member of the National Committee of our Party. The motion is that this convention send its greetings and wishes for a return to health to Comrade Rose Wortis. Are there any objections? Carried and so ordered. The presiding committee, I assume, will write the appropriate greetings.

The next point on the order of business is the report of the Committee on Appeals.

*James Jackson:* Comrade Chairman, I would like to make a proposal. In view of the lateness of the hour, it is obviously quite impossible to give adequate and judicious review to the accumulation of unresolved appeals to this convention. Therefore, with the agreement of waiver on the part of the comrades appealing, I would like to propose that all materials on the appeals be referred to the incoming National Committee, which shall be instructed to act on these appeals within sixty to ninety days. I would urgently appeal, on the basis of good common sense, in recognition of the hour, without at all waiving the standard

rights of Communists with grievances and appeals against various committees and levels of leadership at all future conventions, that this procedure be adopted. I so move.

*Ch.:* The motion is, to refer the recommendations of the committee on appeals to the incoming National Committee, with full power to act within a period of sixty to ninety days. [Vote taken.] The motion is carried.

*Ch.:* The next point on the order of business is the report on a question which, in the humble opinion of your Chair, is as important as any other question with which this convention has been confronted. The report of the "Save Our Press" Committee, Comrade Max Gordon.

*Max Gordon:* Comrades, I, too, would like to be able to refer this question. I will not take very much time, but I feel that it is necessary to place before the House the deadly seriousness of a problem which faces our movement. Unless the convention, takes dramatic and drastic action to change the situation regarding the circulation of *The Worker* and the *Daily Worker*, this movement will, within a very short time, be deprived of all journalistic expression—the major method by which the Left makes its position known both to the country, and to the people of the Left.

You have before you a resolution which was drafted by the Commit-

tee on the Press. The Committee had several State and section convention resolutions before it. Some are incorporated in the resolution. One, from Ohio, the Committee did not go along with. This would have urged our Party to propose the elimination of the *Daily Worker*. The Committee, in its large majority, voted emphatically that this convention affirm the Party's determination to fight to maintain the *Daily Worker*. (Applause.)

Let me say just one word on the Committee. There were 60 scheduled to be members of it. Twenty-one were present. From New York, there were supposed to be 35; there were no more than half a dozen. Yet the comrades knew that the issue at stake was whether or not this movement, for the first time in 33 years, was to have no public voice. This, in short, is the problem that confronts us.

Let me put the facts very bluntly before you. In the past eight years, the circulation of *The Worker* has declined by more than 80 per cent. The statement incorrectly said 75 per cent. The *Daily Worker*, by two-thirds. The figures show that, from about 80,000 *Worker* circulation in 1949, we are down now to about 14 and a half thousand. For the *Daily Worker*, from 20,000 in 1949—in January of this year, it was only 6,700. There has been a continued sharp drop this past year. And

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

241

the reason for that you comrades are pretty well aware of. Number one is the fact that, because of the situation in the Party over the past year, many of our Party organizations have just completely ceased to circulate the paper, and as a result, some 3,000 copies of *Worker* circulation have been lost in bundles circulated by the Party organization. The second factor is that we have completely failed to develop a circulation campaign the result of which has been a further drop of some 3,000 *Worker* subs and some 550 *Daily* subs.

Immediately following this convention, within the next thirty to sixty days, we will lose several thousand more readers unless there is an immediate pick-up in the circulation campaign. That is the problem that confronts us.

The finances of the situation, the statement before you, means that we will have no possibility—no means by which to maintain the paper. That is the situation that confronts us right now.

I don't want to say any more about this, comrades, except to call your attention to the conclusion of the statement, that is the proposals that we make. We first propose that the convention recognizes that the circulation of the Marxist press is a fundamental political necessity for our Party, and that we resolve to end the Party's long neglect in this re-

gard, that this convention instruct the incoming National leadership and call on all incoming State and local leadership, and particularly on the re-convening State conventions, to make this an essential and central part of their order of business. The convention expresses the determination of our Party to strengthen the Marxist press by throwing its full backing to the improvement of *The Worker*. There were many comrades in the committee who felt that special attention has to be paid to the improvement in *The Worker* as the means by which we approach many people outside of our movement. And at the same time, we express the determination of the Party to throw its full backing to maintain the *Daily Worker* and improve its circulation, especially in New York.

Now, comrades, the committee also proposes that this convention urge the staffs of the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker* that they consider the immediate launching of a joint \$150,000 Fund Drive and subscription campaign to continue until June 30th, with the Party throwing its full weight and resources into the campaign in order to ensure its success. Such a circulation and financial campaign, tough as it will be, is decisive for the continued existence of the two papers.

We also urge—the way we place the question in the statement is that

we continue the drive, by recognizing that it has not gotten off the floor, and give it a new initiative in the launching of this new \$150,000 drive. We also propose that the Party begin to pay some attention to getting the paper back on the stands in the many cities from which it has been thrown off, and in New York City, where it has also been taken off many of the stands that we used to have.

We call upon the convention also, and the incoming National Committee, to initiate within the Party, within the next several months, discussion on a State, and then on a national scale, with regard to the future of our paper, how it can be improved, how we are going to circulate, and how we are going to finance it.

Well, comrades, no resolution by itself can do the job. The extent to which you comrades, the State and local leaders of our movement, get to work on this drive to save the paper, as the central feature of your activities, will be decisive for the paper. (Applause.)

*A Delegate:* The statement of our "Save Our Press" Committee points out the reasons for the crisis and decline of our labor press. At one point, it mentions the sharp attack of reaction. Another point is the errors of our movement. This is very well put, and I agree with it, but I would like to bring out another point.

On the other side of the report, there is a section which says it considers that *The Worker* and the *Daily Worker* are major journalistic expressions of the viewpoint of the Communist movement. Here I want to bring some criticism of the way the *Daily Worker* has presented the Hungarian question. I don't think it presents it from the viewpoint of the Communist movement.

After the first day of the Hungarian outbreak, the *Daily Worker* seems to have had a very good standpoint—point of view, where it brought out that the counter-revolutionary forces had taken advantage of the situation in Hungary, and that they created and were the main force of the conditions there. But soon after—I should put it this way, after the Imre Nagy government made the statement that it is a mistake to take this as a counter-revolutionary event, from that point on, the *Daily Worker* also changed its stand.

I just want to bring out the point that the *Daily Worker* has lost readers, and the support of many good old-timers, who have sacrificed their lives to fight against fascism and to fight for socialist internationalism. They have stopped buying the *Daily Worker*, reading the *Daily Worker*, or supporting the *Daily Worker*. If we want to do work for the upkeep of our paper, of the saving of our paper, I think the first thing would be that the *Daily Worker* should change its previous stand on this question, and at the same time, I would ask the National Committee to do the same thing, pointing out that probably our Com-

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

243

Communist Party, if I am not mistaken, is probably the only Communist Party in the world that is taking this wrong stand in connection with the Hungarian movement. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* Will the comrades please keep order during the discussion?

*Another Delegate:* Comrades, as a member of the committee I would like to say a few words in relation to the program presented to you. All of the people who attended the sessions had criticism of one character or another in relation to the contents of the paper. However, every one of us simultaneously felt that the key question before us at this moment was to save the paper in the first place, in order to guarantee that we have an organ, an ideological weapon, which we can use in the coming unfolding struggles that lie ahead of us, particularly in terms of the program adopted at this convention. In light of that, we all agreed that we would not permit the differences which each and every one of us may have to stand in the way, that we would use all of our effort to help to convince this convention that this was the key question before us.

Comrade Gordon has related to us, and the statement before us that the Committee presented indicates the dire necessity of our getting to work around this main question. I hope the consideration that this convention gives to this question will be a lot more serious in this direction, or else we will not have an organ to discuss whether it has a good or a bad content, and that will mean that all the discussion here will have been in vain in the first place.

So I would like to see the seriousness of this question placed before us today, rather than some of the other questions around which we can argue and discuss for many, many hours, and I am sure that all of us have something to say in regard to that.

*A Delegate:* As one who is vitally concerned with the press, and has been active with the press for a period of about seven or eight years, I am very glad to see this resolution, and I certainly urge its adoption. But I would like to say a few words with regard to the press, because it is our sharpest weapon. It is the best weapon we have. Yes, there are features on which I have happened to disagree in the past with *The Worker*. In spite of that, I have done everything in my power to keep the paper going, even as an individual, for the past period of time.

Now, we have talked about isolation here. We are not as isolated as you would think, because I have found, in my experience with the press, that I personally have contact with hundreds of people. The only problem is that I don't have more than two arms and two legs. Now, the question is, we all have to begin to get back to the point where we distribute the paper at the shop gates, return our paper to the working class, bring it to the people where we can. We must also begin to make every effort to get out on the Sunday or the Saturday for the mobilization of the paper, to begin to carry the message of socialism in the paper. I think that is one thing that I find in particular lacking, that we have talked about everything but

socialism, and I think that the paper has got to reflect the sentiments of the convention here, that we begin to turn, not only the paper towards the working class, but our agitation for socialism toward the working class.

I would like to reiterate that we should go on record for the adoption of this, but everybody get to work and help build the paper. There is no reason in the world why we can't increase the circulation of *The Worker*, in particular—the week-end paper—if given an improved content, and we also get out and work at it, that paper should be able to reach a circulation of 50,000 to 100,000 people reading it regularly on the week-end, if we really work at it. (Applause.)

*Ch.:* The question has been called. We will now vote on the report. [Vote taken.] The report is carried.

Report of the Civil Liberties Committee. I will call on Comrade Si Gerson of New York.

*Si Gerson:* On behalf of the co-chairman, Comrade Patterson and myself, and the entire committee, we want to state that, due to the pressure of time, we will not read the entire resolution on the Smith Act. We want to propose the following: that we refer all of the documents of the civil liberties committee, which worked hard and long at this convention, to the incoming National Committee for action.

I do want to take this opportunity to remind the comrades of something they may have seen in this

morning's newspaper. Yesterday, the U.S. Court of Appeals in this circuit affirmed the sentencing of Comrades Gil Green and Henry Winston to an additional three years for contempt. That means that these comrades have to serve eight years. Besides those comrades, there are nine other comrades in prison, seventy-one are awaiting the outcome of appeals—many of you are here—and twenty-four are awaiting trial. I'm sure you understand the necessity of speed and unity and for mobilizing the Party to a firm united front policy, and the possibility—never greater than today.

Your civil liberties committee recommends, in the enactment part of its resolution, the following: that the incoming National Committee take all steps necessary to place this work on a high priority basis, including (1) strengthening and enlarging the Party Commission on Civil Liberties and Defense Work, (2) to convoke a two-day working conference on a national basis within two months, this conference to prepare a plan of work on the defense of the Party and the fight for civil liberties. This plan to include the fight on the Smith Act, for amnesty, and against the McCarran Act and the Walter-McCarran Law. Your committee moves the adoption.

*Ch.:* It has been regularly moved and seconded that this report be adopted. Are we ready to vote?

SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

[Vote taken.] This report is carried.

The audit report. I recognize Comrade Winter.

*Carl Winter:* The audit report was to have been presented to this convention several sessions ago. It is proposed by the presiding committee that we refer this report to the incoming National Committee for its records, and whatever action may be necessary. So moved.

*Ch.:* It has been moved and seconded that the report of the Audit Committee be referred to the National Committee. [Vote taken.] Carried and so ordered.

Comrade Carl Ross, for the Presiding Committee, on the reply to the fraternal greetings.

*Carl Ross:* One of the matters of special pride to this convention, I am sure, has been the many messages of fraternal greeting received from Communist parties abroad. We were especially recommended by this convention to prepare an answer to one of these greetings, which I propose to read, and then to make recommendations for action:

To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France:

Dear Comrades:

Our national convention has received many warm and fraternal messages from the Communists of many lands. We welcome them as expressions of that important principle once voiced by Abraham Lincoln, "The strongest bond of human sympathy outside the family relation,

should be one uniting all working people of all nations and tongues and kindreds."

We are pleased to respond to the greetings we received from Comrade Jacques Duclos, for the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, one week before our convention, and from the Central Committee on the eve of its opening. We pay tribute to the great Party of the resistance movement and the staunch sons and daughters of the French working class that your Party represents. We place great value upon your expressions of sympathy and solidarity to our own hard-pressed Party, especially as we recall the spirit of friendship that has animated our two peoples in the cause of democracy since the establishment of our Republics. This historic friendship cannot be extinguished by the anti-democratic and aggressive actions of the men of Wall Street which run counter to the will and traditions of our people.

We deeply regret, and strongly protest, the arbitrary exclusion of the fraternal representatives of your Party from our country by our State Department. These cold-war barriers have been injurious also in preventing full exchanges of information and opinion, making it more difficult that you in France or we in America might be fully acquainted with conditions in each other's country.

In the greeting signed by Comrade Jacques Duclos there is expressed misgivings and criticism with respect to the course we are following. We do not question his right to do so. Mutual criticism is beneficial and most useful when exercised on the basis of fraternal and equal relations between the respective Communist Parties.

We are in the closing sessions of the National Convention of our Party. As an independent working class Party we are motivated by the best interests of our class and nation, whose true interests coincide with those of the common people in all lands. In four days of free debate, we have arrived at our decisions, and for these we are accountable to our Party membership, our class and the American people, who will be the final judge of the correctness of our decisions in the light of their experience.

The heart of the decisions of this convention is the charting of a road ahead for our Party and our judgment as to the

path to Socialism that the American people must eventually take by their own free choice.

We are deeply persuaded that our decisions are based on sound principles of scientific socialism, of Marxism-Leninism, rather than being revisionist. We are of the opinion that some of our past contributions to America have been limited by dogmatic and doctrinaire understanding and application of these principles, as well as the oft-times uncritical acceptance of views of Marxists in other countries, and often by a failure to appreciate thoroughly enough the conditions and democratic traditions of our country. We believe that our Resolutions express an important departure from the past in stating that: "The Communist Party bases its theory generally on the cultural heritage of mankind and particularly on the principles of scientific socialism as developed by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V. I. Lenin. These principles the Communist Party of the U.S.A. interprets, applies and strives to develop further in accordance with the requirements of the American class struggle and democratic traditions."

Our Resolution also clarifies our concept of relations among working class parties. "These relations must be based on the principles of scientific socialism, on proletarian internationalism, they must be based on each Communist Party serving the best national interests of its people and thereby the common interests of all progressive humanity. This requires the equality and independence of Marxist parties in the mutual discussion and resolution of common problems; the right and duty of the Communists of all countries to engage in comradely criticism of the policies and practices of the Communists of any country whenever they feel this necessary. This will strengthen, not weaken, international solidarity. It will advance the cause of socialism in all countries."

It is in this spirit that we have given careful consideration to the opinions expressed in your message, and extend to you our own warm and comradely greetings.

16th NATIONAL CONVENTION  
COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.  
February 9-12, 1957.

(Applause.)

[The text given above is the final form of the letter, as amended slightly by the National Committee in accordance with the following motion.]

I move that this message be referred for final action to our National Committee, and that the National Committee be directed to take appropriate action to reply to all of the fraternal greetings we have received, in the spirit of this convention.

*Ch.:* The motion is to refer. There is no debate on a motion to refer.

[Some questions and procedural discussion.]

*Ross:* It is the opinion of the writers of this letter that essentially it must stand as is, in its content, because it is based on direct excerpts and quotations from the work and the resolutions adopted by this convention.

*James Jackson:* Point of information: I see that we are going to answer all greetings that have been brought to us. I think it is very important, and I'd like to know why we did not at this convention have an answer to the Communist Party of Mexico, written out for us to be answered here at this convention. Also, shall all of these telegrams and greetings that have been sent to this convention be printed in pamphlet form, or any other form that will be distributed for circulation?

*Ross:* Unfortunately, your convention established a small committee for this job. Its members were busily occupied, and could not complete the work that was assigned to them. In



## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

247

my opinion, it is regrettable that we do not have all the necessary messages of reply, but at this stage, I think we should express our feelings that this convention desires such replies shall be made.

As to the last question, I can only say it would be appropriate to refer to your committee established here the question of what action to take with regard to these replies.

*A Delegate:* I would like to know whether, in referring to the National Committee, the N.C. will put this message in line with the amendment which has been adopted by this convention to the Draft Resolution. This message does not stand in line with this.

*Ross:* I would recommend that the intent of the motion to refer be understood, that if the National Committee should find this inconsistent in any way with the decisions of this convention, it should so bring it in line. I indicated that it was based on resolutions adopted here; perhaps it can be improved upon to more accurately express those decisions.

*A Delegate:* Point of information: Is it correct that the resolutions on the Jewish question are also being referred to the National Committee?

*Ch.:* I gather from the committee that these documents are going to be referred to the National Committee for guidance and action, and that they have the same status as the previous letter.

*Sid Stein:* Comrades, we have two different types of resolutions before us. One, based upon documents of this convention, that were discussed here

and adopted; and the National Committee, if it finds anything inconsistent with these decisions of this convention, can and is instructed to, change it accordingly. The document just presented was presented by agreement with the Presiding Committee and the Resolutions Committee for only one purpose: to instruct the National Committee.

Now, there were a number of resolutions on the Jewish question. There were a number of documents presented. The purpose here is material for study. This material, and all other material that is before the committee now, will be turned over to the National Committee, and all comrades are invited to send any further material on the question to the committee. And the National Committee will discuss it, and then will draft a document. This question was not discussed here, was not adopted here, and therefore, we did not bring it here with any intent of being a guide to action by the National Committee. And these two documents, therefore, are different and to make them the same is merely to confuse the issue.

*Ch.:* The motion before the house is to refer this to the full National Committee. [Vote taken.] It is carried and so ordered.

*A Delegate:* Point of procedure: We went on record to go to nine o'clock. I submit it is after nine. I think that we have to decide what we are going to do at this point. I would like to move that we extend our convention until 10:30.

*Ch.:* A motion has been made to extend the convention time until 10:30. [Vote taken.] Carried.

*Another Delegate:* Motion on procedure: I would like to offer a motion that this

body go on record protesting the method of getting these items through.

*Ch.:* That is not a motion on procedure. That is a motion of substance.

The chairman of the committee will now conclude his report on resolutions.

*Stein:* Very briefly, the Committee, which had over 100 resolutions before it, with many of them prepared to submit to the convention, moves that all resolutions acted upon by the Committee, and others not acted upon, and particularly emphasizing for the purpose of the knowledge of the convention delegates here that these resolutions include one on farm work, work among women, on the youth question, work in national groups, and the question of culture; a quite important resolution which our convention took note of in its elections—the approach to the Mexican-American question, which is much needed in our Party; a resolution on Latin America, Puerto Rico, and other important subjects, will be referred to the incoming National Committee for disposition. I so move.

*Ch.:* It has been regularly moved and seconded that the remainder of the general resolutions be referred to the National Committee. [Vote taken.] Carried and so ordered.

*Ch.:* Comrade Steve Nelson will report for the Plan of Work Committee.\*

\* The Draft Plan of Work appears on page 345.

*Steve Nelson:* As we expected, this matter would come before you when you were very tired, and the members of your committee are tired also. We decided to cut down the report to the bone, and to indicate the central point that our committee considers we ought to tackle when we go out of this convention. There were quite a few meetings of this committee, and there were quite a number of recommendations and resolutions brought from various delegations. We can't even list them here—we're not going to, comrades.

There were two central questions that were agreed to that we should emphasize in closing this convention. It was felt, comrades, that, in the spirit of what most comrades had to say on the matter confronting the Negro people in this country, that that be the point we should emphasize here, the point on which we should concentrate our work when we go back from here, and that is, the whole struggle for Negro rights to be a long-range proposition before us, as we return to our districts. We considered that it would be impossible, and presumptuous on our part, to attempt to work out a plan, the kind we used to work out in the past, where we would say, "Do this," and "Do that," and "Do the other," because there is already a tremendous movement here that doesn't require us to initiate it. Furthermore, in many of our communities,

## SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

249

there are all kinds of activities going on in which our comrades are active in this movement.

The point that we wanted to stress is that the Communist participation in this work on all levels can deepen this struggle, and can bring greater meaning to it. I think we are all heartened by the fact that a new thing has developed in our country with reference to the question of Negro rights. I don't think that we have ever had a situation where so many people of diverse opinions are interested in the Negro question in one way or another. We are urging, therefore, that we don't try to invent campaigns, we don't need to. What we do is to go back into our districts and put it on the agenda, and see what is going on in the community, and see in what way we can deepen that struggle in the various communities.

If time allowed, we could illustrate to you, as illustrations were given, of how this struggle is moving in different ways in different places. Now the problem is how to play a role in the struggle, and give it some orientation. And that can be done.

In the various organizations, people agreed to carry on the struggle on the level of the particular organization's principles and understanding. But if we go into, and give some substance to the struggle, it can be raised to a higher level. For example, we note that the trade

union movement has endorsed the struggle for Negro rights generally, unions up in the North, and down South, and all over. And yet, comrades, when the struggle was going on in the South, there were not enough concrete actions in the North by white workers, in white unions and other organizations, but which they were ready for. I can tell you, comrades, in one place in Homestead, in the Steel Workers Union, workers have been stirred to such a point where they have undertaken all kinds of actions on behalf of the South, and they have also gone further, so that there is a greater activity on the part of the steel workers in this particular union.

What we are trying to say is—examine this question, everywhere in your community, make this the major campaign in the spirit of the NAACP, in the long-range way—"Free by '63"—not a campaign that starts today to finish tomorrow, but a long-range one. So that's one of the recommendations we made: concentrate on this issue.

The other issue is the peace struggle, and that's the only point we want to recommend. This issue of struggle for peace. It's agreed here that the struggle for peace finds its expression in various ways in various communities. We know now that there have been already some sentiments on the part of workers in many industries where they are com-

plaining about the high taxes. They are beginning to see that the big atomic program and the war program and the "cold war" digs at their pockets. And there is a big resentment growing against this heavy taxation. It is felt that one of the things that should be emphasized wherever possible in this phase of the struggle against war and for outlawing the atomic bomb and the H-bomb, that it be tied in with economic problems of the people, especially with the question of taxes, and then you will see that this struggle, too, will be raised to a higher level.

Comrades, those are the two main suggestions that we have to make at this time as to campaigns. We are not making any other recommendations because you are tired and we are tired. We had no intention of working out a plan in detail. However, we have a recommendation for the incoming National Committee, that they should work out a rough plan of work in the near future, send the draft out to the districts, that it be discussed in the districts, and that, if possible, a conference be called in the center of comrades active in this phase of work, and in that way, discuss the details of the program which could more concretely be brought before the Party than we can possibly do at this convention.

I thank you for your attention.  
(Applause.)

*Ch.:* It has been regularly moved and seconded that this report be adopted. On the question.

*A Delegate:* I don't want to be repetitious, neither do I want to burden this convention with a question that I have already raised here. I endorse this plan of action proposed by Comrade Steve Nelson on two points, particularly—and I think it is a splendid plan of action—on the Negro people's movement and on the problem of peace. But I cannot understand why we cannot do what I tried to propose before, and I cannot understand why we cannot develop a plan of action of a similar scope with regard to the Jewish question. I didn't see, in the original resolution, their proposal about discussing this question, but I don't think that is adequate, and I am therefore proposing that we add to this plan of action a third point, that the National Committee be instructed to develop a plan of action, also to study it carefully. I don't suppose that the two things are parallel—they have some similarities but that we develop a plan of action with respect to developing a campaign around the whole question of the Jewish people in our country.

*Mimi (New York):* I don't want to go into the details of the report, because, as Comrade Steve knows, the report is one that has been building up in the Party for many years, and one that the Party will continue to build. It is particularly on the plan of action, comrades, that I want to pay special tribute to the unsung heroes of this convention. We named them so in our board. These are the comrades, hun-

## A20. SESSIONS OF THE CONVENTION

251

dreds of whom in our area and all over the country, I am sure, are now continuing their day to day work for the questions before the house here—on the question of peace, on the question of integration, on the question of trade union work, PTA, political action—every form, you name it, they're in it—comrades that have been part of our deliberations and are part of the work that is going on today. I think they have helped make this convention, and they have sent a mandate to us in this convention to come out with a sense of unity, come out with a sense of confidence that we can solve the problems, and that we can work together in developing our principles and our plan of action.

I would like to make one comment that I think is necessary for us to learn out of this convention. I say us advisedly, because I am standing on this side of the house, and this is my own personal thinking and opinion. And that is, out of all the discussions that have gone on through the year, there have been many things learned. There have been sharp discussions; there have been emotional discussions; there have been personal discussions; there have been objective discussions. I think that out of New York, we have had some wonderful discussions. I think also that you have felt a note of bitterness creep into the discussions, and a note of distrust. I think we have not had an opportunity to hear enough from the out-of-town delegations on some of the ways we have conducted ourselves on this platform. I feel that we in this convention—I for one—have

learned a great deal more about how discussions have been conducted in many of the other districts and in the delegations there, and that we will learn a lesson on how to bring this back into our State convention, and conduct our discussions with a greater degree of clarity, understanding and respect for each other, and bring New York into a strong, healthy Party, which will carry out this plan of work. (Applause.)

*A Delegate:* My amendment is that in order to expedite this matter, the coming district conventions be instructed to take up this question and forward immediately their recommendations to the incoming National Committee to supplement and help in guidance for a plan of work.

*Ch.:* Is that accepted by the committee?

*Alex:* I would like to propose, on the question of plan of work, conferences to be called not later than within three months to discuss the trade union problems that have been touched on in the trade union resolution at this convention. The trade union resolution did not get the necessary time for discussion, and I think it is necessary that immediately after the convention conferences of a regional or national nature be held, so that we have a proper understanding as to how we will apply the resolution adopted in the various industries on a local and national scale.

*A Delegate:* Comrade Chairman, I would like to make a motion that the report given by Comrade Steve on the plan of work be referred to the National Committee for working out a

more detailed statement to be issued and for the membership of our Party—a plan of work around which we can rally our Party membership.

*Ch.:* It has been regularly moved and seconded that this report be referred for the purposes indicated. [Vote taken.] The report as amended has been referred to the National Committee.

I recognize Comrade Fred Fine for the Presiding Committee for a special motion.

*Fred Fine:* I think all the delegates will agree that a number of comrades who have been with us throughout the session, and some of them were in these halls many hours before we started, and will be laboring many hours after we leave,

and who have no direct voice or vote, deserve a vote of thanks from the delegates for their devotion beyond the call of duty in the technical and administrative work of this convention. (Applause.)

I move that we give them a vote of thanks.

*Ch.:* All in favor will signify by saying "Aye." Opposed, if any? Carried and so ordered.

We will now sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" as our adjournment of this convention.

[Star-Spangled Banner sung.]

*Ch.:* This convention of the Communist Party of the United States now stands adjourned. (Applause.)

# MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

Adopted by the 16th National Convention, C.P.U.S.A.

February 9-12, 1957

## I. THE SITUATION TODAY

**For a Prosperous America; For an End to Poverty;  
For a New Program of Social Advance**

The years since 1939 have witnessed a huge expansion in the American economy. During this time, our productive capacity has more than doubled, and today the United States towers over the capitalist world, surpassing in productive power and wealth all other capitalist countries put together.

This enormous power, monopolized by a handful of giant corporations, rests on a tribute drawn from the whole capitalist world through a vast expansion in foreign investment. It rests on two wars and extensive militarization of the American economy. It is the power of American imperialism, more grasping and parasitic than ever before.

These same years have witnessed also a prolonged period of relative prosperity—a period of nearly two decades without a major economic crisis.

The wartime boom, in a country untouched by the destructive effects of war, has continued into the postwar years. Since 1947, despite temporary declines, industrial production has risen by 42%. Corporate profits before taxes have nearly doubled. Real wages in organized industry, particularly during the last few years, have risen substantially. And by mid-1956, employment reached a record level of 66½ million.

As in the 'twenties, the current boom has once again given rise to illusions of permanent prosperity. Crises, say the spokesmen of big business and the Eisenhower Administration, are a thing of the past. The government, through its capacity to intervene and to "man-

age" the economy, can prevent any major disaster and can limit economic fluctuations to mere "adjustments." Moreover, they assert, we have developed a "people's capitalism," in which the share of income and wealth going to the working people is steadily rising, while that going to big business is falling.

But such Wall Street-inspired illusions are entirely unfounded. In reality, the very factors sparking the boom serve also to increase the underlying instability of the economy and the imbalance between productive capacity and the market. Outstanding among these factors are:

1. *A high rate of investment in fixed capital throughout the postwar period.* This has been motivated principally by the need to restore world-wide damage and domestic shortages arising from the war, as well as to replace obsolete and wornout equipment, by technological advances, and by the expansion of basic industrial capacity to fit the enlarged world role and military program of American monopoly capital. Coupled with this has been an expansion of the consumer durable goods market and an extended boom in housing construction.

But today the rate of increase in industrial capacity far exceeds the rate of growth in purchasing power. This disparity ultimately leads to a point when continued expansion in the face of inadequate markets is no longer profitable and capital investment declines.

2. *A vast growth in government spending.* For the current fiscal year, cash outlays of government at all levels will total nearly \$100 billion, of which federal government expenditures account for some \$69 billion.

Of the federal outlays, about two-thirds goes for "national security." In large part, therefore, the present high level of the economy is based on the unreliable prop of arms spending, which during the Korean war hit a peak rate of \$55 billion a year, and is today running at an annual rate of about \$41 billion. And for the coming fiscal year, President Eisenhower has proposed a record peace-time federal budget of \$72 billion, \$45 billion of it for military purposes.

Among the consequences of such spending are the postwar inflation which has brought prices of consumer goods and the cost of living to their highest level in history; a federal debt of \$276 billion, only slightly below the World War II peak, with its billions of dollars in



## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

255

interest charges; and a tax burden which consumes one-third of the earnings of the average worker.

3. *An unparalleled inflation of private credit.* Corporate debt has grown  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times since 1945. Personal indebtedness—home mortgages and consumer debt—has risen to \$137 billion, of which more than \$100 billion was accumulated during the last ten years. Consumer credit alone has grown to nearly \$41 billion and amounts to 15% of all consumer disposable income—an all-time high.

The most recent economic upsurge, since 1954, has been stimulated chiefly by such credit inflation, together with a large volume of tax rebates and give-aways to big business. Hence, our economy today has taken on much of the aspect of a typical speculative peace-time boom, reminiscent in many ways of the boom of the twenties. The mounting volume of credit, with its attending threat of further inflation, contributes greatly to the underlying instability of the economy.

4. *Postwar expansion of foreign investment.* Today, American investment abroad, in all forms, totals \$45 billion, or four times the pre-war level, and the profits extracted (both admitted and concealed) are estimated at nearly \$10 billion a year. In the main branches of American industry, profits from foreign investment range from 10% of total profits to as high as 50% in the case of the oil trusts. These volumes of investment and profit exceed those of all other imperialist countries combined. (And this is in addition to the billions in extra profits obtained through the super-exploitation of the Negro people in this country.)

But these foreign investments rest on a very shaky foundation. The growing breakdown of the colonial system and the spreading movement for national liberation threaten the continued extraction of these super-profits and the whole parasitic structure built on imperialist exploitation.

Clearly the foregoing features render the future of the economy far less secure than depicted by those who speak for big business.

Moreover, today's boom has by no means brought prosperity for all.

It has not been shared by the great majority of America's farmers. From 1947 to mid-1956, farm incomes fell by one third. In 1955, the Department of Agriculture reports, net farm income was lower than in any year since 1940. Small and family-sized farms have de-

clined in number while corporation farms and the holdings of the biggest operators have increased. Added to this is the growing impact of such natural disasters as flood and drought—disasters contributed to by deforestation and other destruction of natural resources by big business interests.

The persistent agricultural depression places a heavy economic burden on the shoulders of the small marginal and family sized farm operators, and the outbreak of a general crisis would have a catastrophic effect on the small farmers. For never before was the agricultural economy so closely bound up with the country's industrial and financial life, and never was it under such sharp pressure from monopoly.

One-fifth of a nation suffers poverty in the midst of plenty; one family in five earns less than \$2,000 a year—that is, less than \$40 a week. Among Negro families, the proportion is more than two in five. Ten million American children live in slums. In the midst of the boom, the country is dotted with distressed areas and "sick" industries plagued by high unemployment.

Despite the record national employment, the rise in production since 1954 has brought no corresponding rise in factory jobs. The auto workers, during the past year, suffered an alarming growth in unemployment, with 100,000 of those laid off still not absorbed at the current peak of production. And with the further extension of automation and increased productivity, unemployment threatens to spread further.

Nor has small business flourished in recent years. The rise in profits has been concentrated in the biggest corporations, and bankruptcies of small business ventures have reached their highest rate since 1939.

The chief beneficiaries of the boom have been the giant trusts and monopolies. The year 1955, says *Fortune*, was "very definitely the best year ever for big business."

The monopolies have continued to grow and to become ever more powerful. Today, the 500 largest industrial corporations account for about half of all production and employment. These giants rake in the lion's share of the profits. In the first quarter of 1956, profits per dollar of sales for the biggest companies (those with assets of \$100,000,000 or more) were nearly five times those of the smaller companies (with assets under \$250,000). And under the Cadillac

MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

257

Cabinet, with its give-aways and its policies favoring big business, mergers are taking place at a higher rate than ever before.

The enormous profits of the trusts are obtained at the expense of the workers, the small farmers and small business. Though real wages are rising, they have not kept pace with the rise in productivity or the still greater growth of corporate profits, and the worker's share in his product thus continues to decline.

Hence, despite the prolonged prosperity and despite the significant efforts of the new features which have emerged in the American economy, the basic contradictions inherent in capitalist production are not abating but are becoming sharper. The fundamental factors making for economic crisis continue to operate today, no less than in the boom of the 'twenties—in particular, the basic factor which Marx described as "the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces as if only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit," while the actual purchasing power of the masses remains relatively restricted and lags increasingly behind.

The boom, with its growing credit inflation, only conceals the sharpening contradiction between the forces of production and the capitalist relations under which they are operated—a contradiction which can be finally resolved in the people's interests only through the establishment of a socialist society. The Marxist theory of crisis is not invalidated by the prolonged period of prosperity.

In assessing the postwar economic developments, the Party was correct in giving special weight to the effects of extensive growth in military expenditures. However, in 1945, 1949 and 1954, we incorrectly predicted that the then current declines would develop into crises of major proportions.

At times, the Party gave a one-sided appraisal of the effects of the arms program. It overlooked the extent of continuing investments in fixed capital to replace, expand or modernize equipment which had worn out or become obsolete since the last major cycle of fixed capital renewal in the 'thirties. Together with this, it failed to size up adequately the level of commercial and residential construction, the scope of unsatisfied consumer demand, the possibilities of credit expansion, and the government's tax program of rebates, rapid write-offs and lowered excess profits taxes.

258 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

At the root of these mistakes has been our acceptance of the erroneous thesis, widely prevalent among Marxists in all countries, that in the postwar stage of the general crisis of capitalism no significant peace-time expansion of capitalist production would be possible. This contributed to a one-sided and incomplete study of economic data. At the same time, our inadequate attention to the new and specific features of the American economy led to the application of the Marxian theory of crisis in a routine, formal and doctrinaire manner.

Our repeated estimates of impending economic crisis had many harmful effects: projection of unrealistic economic programs; over-estimation of the tempo of radicalization of the masses, with resultant mistakes in tactical approaches to united front relations, especially in the trade unions; and finally, encouragement of all tendencies to overestimate the imminence of war and fascism.

The correction of our wrong approaches in this field is a vital prerequisite for obtaining a proper understanding of the present-day American economy and for the development of a correct economic program. The National Committee proposes, toward this end, that a special commission be established to launch a thorough-going study of the main theoretical questions confronting us, and on this basis to make a fresh analysis of the total economic picture. All Party members are urged to participate to the fullest extent in the study and discussion of these problems.

For, American capitalism has undergone great changes since the pre-war years. Many important developments have become intensified to such a degree that they have taken on certain new features—features which have a pronounced effect on the course of the economic cycle and all related economic factors.

Central among these is the tremendous growth of monopoly, as a result of which the impact of monopoly control on the determination of prices and production, and on the position of small business, has greatly increased.

Hand in hand with this has gone a tremendous increase in the intervention of the government in the economy. This intervention, whose primary aim is the protection of monopoly profits, today penetrates every aspect of our economic life. Huge government expenditures, chiefly for military purposes, government subsidies, guaranteed markets, stock-piling, tax write-offs and give-aways—all these have in

MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

259

turn had far-reaching effects on the role of taxation, government debt and monetary policies. Government economic intervention has been a contributing factor also in the unequaled rise in the volume of private debt and particularly in the enhanced role of consumer credit in the economy.

Another important feature is the new wave of technological advances, particularly the development of automation, which has not only greatly increased productivity, but has also begun to affect profoundly the composition of the labor force, the role of skilled labor, and the growing shift in employment from manufacturing to service occupations. And these effects will be vastly increased once the tremendous potential of the peace-time harnessing of atomic energy begins to make itself felt.

An especially significant new development is the impact of a greatly expanded socialist world on our economy. Particularly important is the peaceful competitive bid of the socialist countries for world markets, and their growing ability to offer underdeveloped countries a source of capital goods independent of the imperialist nations. Also of great significance is the potential role of uninhibited trade between the capitalist and socialist worlds.

There are also certain special characteristics of the American economy—for example, the exceptionally prominent part played by the production and sale of consumer durable goods, notably the automobile—which require examination.

Finally, there are certain long-unresolved theoretical questions, such as the operation in this country of Marx's law of the impoverishment of the working class, or the operation of the law of value under monopoly conditions, which demand answers with growing insistence.

The failure adequately to study these new and special features is a major cause of economic errors which we have committed in recent years.

A most important factor on today's economic scene is the existence of a greatly strengthened, more unified labor movement, whose power has been enhanced especially by the AFL-CIO merger. Labor has won significant economic gains during the postwar years, among them a virtually uninterrupted series of annual wage increases.

But today labor faces new and more acute problems. Though

260 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

production has risen during the past few years, factory employment has fallen off. Among industrial workers, there is a growing sense of job insecurity and mounting pressure for the thirty-hour week without reduction in take-home pay. There are intensified problems of speed-up and worsened working conditions. In many industries the runaway shop evil is reaching more and more serious proportions.

Organized labor has developed an extensive economic program to combat poverty and depression. Included in it are demands for higher wages, an end to discrimination in employment and pay, a shorter work week without reduction in pay, a reduced burden of taxes on low-income groups, increases in the minimum wage, in unemployment compensation and in social security benefits generally, large-scale public works, and aid to small business and farmers. In addition, labor has sharply demanded government investigation of monopoly prices and profits.

We Communists endorse and support the forward-looking proposals of the labor movement and other democratic organizations for economic betterment and social welfare. It is through the development of a united movement behind such a program that the American people can advance their economic welfare against the encroachment of the trusts.

We urge, on our part, a peace-time economic program which includes:

1. All necessary measures for the defense of the economic conditions of the working people against the destructive effects of economic crisis;
2. Reduction of arms spending, together with other measures to combat inflation;
3. A program on a grand scale for development of public water power, flood control and conservation projects, as well as the building of highways, schools, housing and other vital public works;
4. A positive world economic role, with the provision of real economic aid—not arms—to underdeveloped countries, and with the restoration and expansion of East-West trade;
5. Large-scale economic development of underdeveloped areas in our own country—notably the South;
6. Defense and extension of national property—forests, oil and other natural resources, as well as atomic energy installations—against the inroads of monopoly.

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

261

The age of automation and the atom, with its great promise, stands in glaring contradiction to widespread poverty, to inadequate educational and health facilities, and to growing insecurity and fear of the future. But to fulfill the promise of plenty which automation and atomic energy hold forth will require concerted struggle by labor and its allies against the big monopolies. In the course of such struggles, if Communists and other socialist-minded Americans work effectively, the working people of this country can achieve a fuller understanding of the need for a socialist economy as the only basic answer to their problems.

### **For Peaceful Coexistence and an End to the Cold War**

Having lived for a decade under threat of atomic war, the American people, like peoples everywhere, deeply desire to enjoy in peace the great benefits which they rightfully demand of the coming atomic age.

Soon after World War II, the giant corporations which dominate American political and economic life set about trying to extend their domination to the rest of the world. They caused our government to scrap FDR's policy of American-Soviet friendship and Big Three unity for peace. They also brought about the scuttling of FDR's "good neighbor" policy in Latin America, which, despite serious limitations, had curbed aggressive intervention and developed better relations with the peoples of that area. Acting through the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations, the economic royalists replaced these policies with one of atom-bomb diplomacy, military alliances, war bases, and active intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. Under the pretext of "defense" against a mythical "Soviet menace" they built up a very profitable arms economy at home.

This policy had its domestic counterpart in the smog of intimidation and conformity that polluted American life, in the persecutions, repressions and witchhunts that steadily eroded the Bill of Rights. The pall of McCarthyism grew until it threatened to blot out American liberties.

Over the years Wall Street's war-like, anti-American policy suffered one setback after another. Our country became isolated, its good name dishonored. Aggressive acts and threats of "massive retaliation" precipitated differences with our "allies." The newly independent nations of Asia refused to toe the State Department and Pentagon line.

262 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

A great people's peace movement embracing hundreds of millions all over the world, insisted on an end to the cold war and the settlement of differences through negotiations. The Soviet Union refused to behave in accordance with the myth of "Soviet aggression," and instead the socialist countries directed all their efforts toward preventing war and achieving peaceful coexistence.

The growing crisis in American foreign policy finally reached the point where in July 1955, the Eisenhower Administration was compelled to drop its opposition to great power negotiations, meet with the Soviet Union at Geneva, and formally renounce the use of force to resolve differences.

The changed world situation, symbolized by Geneva, came about because the American people, no less firmly than other peoples, refused to accept the prospect of atomic annihilation. In 1952 they elected Eisenhower on the strength of his pledge to stop the war in Korea; in 1954 they vetoed Nixon's plan to use American troops in Indochina; in 1955 they quashed the Dulles-Radford provocations around Quemoy and Matsu.

And Geneva was also made possible because the American people refused to bow to McCarthyism, but instead, through their struggles in 1953 and 1954, administered serious defeats to the McCarthyites and began the still incomplete process of restoring the Bill of Rights.

Now there has come into being a vast "zone of peace," embracing socialist and non-socialist peace-seeking states populated by well over half the human race. And this "zone of peace" may also be said to include the peoples of all other countries irrespective of the policies of their governments.

This situation has opened up the prospect of bringing the cold war to an end and ushering in a new era of peaceful coexistence and competition of different social systems.

The realization of such a perspective necessarily involves intense and protracted struggles on the part of all peace forces. For we live in the epoch of imperialism and imperialism breeds the danger of world war. The imperialists will never voluntarily accept peaceful coexistence. It must be imposed upon them by the organized pressure of the peace forces. These forces are growing stronger, whereas the imperialists are being weakened.



MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION 263

While the heightened tensions caused by the imperialist aggression against Egypt and by the events in Hungary are beginning to abate, these developments sharply emphasize three fundamental considerations:

1. A successful struggle for peaceful coexistence requires that we be on guard against certain illusions and distortions that tend to grow up around this perspective. These include the false conceptions that peaceful coexistence is already assured or that it will come about automatically; or that temporary setbacks and periods of heightened tension are henceforth excluded. Above all, this perspective does not in any way imply a freezing of the status quo in regard to social and national liberation. On the contrary, it facilitates the struggle of the peoples to realize their aspirations for social change and national independence.

2. Far from invalidating the perspective of peaceful coexistence, these developments demonstrate anew the real relationship of forces upon which this perspective rests. For, while the imperialists were able to launch the aggression against Egypt, the strength of the peace forces—the Soviet Union, China, the people's democracies, the Bandung nations, as well as the peace sentiments of the people of the United States and other major capitalist countries—was able to stop it quickly. And while the imperialists intervened in the Hungarian tragedy, they did not dare to make it the occasion for open large-scale military intervention.

3. At the same time, while the outcome of these events confirm the perspective, they are a grim reminder that the imperialists have not reconciled themselves to the relationship of forces which makes this perspective possible. While they dare not under present circumstances launch any general war, they seek constantly to change this relationship of world forces. This they do by various means and especially by attempting to split the socialist world or undermine the countries of socialism.

Thus the events in Egypt and Hungary confirm the perspective set forth in the Draft Resolution. At the same time they lead to a deeper and more complete understanding of the conditions under which the struggle must be waged if this perspective is to be realized.

The basic factors that brought Eisenhower to the Summit meeting are today stronger than ever. They make possible a successful strug-

264 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

gle to defeat the present effort of American imperialism to exploit certain temporary difficulties in the socialist world in order to heat up the cold war.

Scrapping his election-eve pledge of no military involvement in Egypt, Eisenhower has opened a campaign to win popular backing for Wall Street's policy of taking over the Middle East from the weakened British and French imperialists. This is the essence of the Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine.

The American people are increasingly expressing their opposition to this new colonialist venture as a threat to peace.

The foreign policy debate continues amidst much confusion, shifting and partisan maneuvering. Among the trends reflected are in broad outline the following:

A. Certain of the most reactionary financial and political circles openly oppose Geneva and flatly reject peaceful negotiations, trade, and coexistence, especially with China. They want to heat up the cold war and compel the "allies," the neutrals and the UN to toe the line. Their ultimate aim is a fascist Fortress America, equipped with overwhelming superiority in air-atomic arms. In its crudest form this is the view of the McCarthy-Jenner-Eastland forces and in a more refined form, of Knowland and of Nixon. It influences some of the Dulles bluff-and-bluster policies. Its virulent anti-Sovietism finds an echo in the utterances of a number of leading Democrats.

B. The predominant Wall Street forces, whose policies are reflected in the Eisenhower wing of the GOP and most of the Democratic leadership, favor a continuation of the main features of the cold war—especially the arms budgets, NATO and the like. At present, they are attempting to exploit the events in Hungary to intensify the cold war. With varying emphasis they call for greater flexibility in relations with the "allies" and neutrals. Along with the Eisenhower Doctrine, they are putting more stress on the economic and ideological aspects of the international struggle. This does not exclude negotiating some partial steps to disarmament.

C. Some spokesmen for Big Business (Lippmann, Eaton, Flanders, Bowles) appear to go farther. They put their main stress on the shift to economic competition and Point 4, while advocating the retention of the arms budget. They favor increased trade and exchange, and continued efforts to achieve some progress towards disarmament.

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

265

Our general outlook towards the struggle for peace can be summed up as follows:

War is not inevitable, though the danger still exists. Imperialism generates this danger, as shown again in the aggression against Egypt. For the big trusts and corporations have not given up their aim of world domination. The danger of another world war, however, has considerably subsided. This remains the main feature of the post-Geneva situation.

This feature can be a powerful stimulant to the people's struggle for peaceful coexistence and an end to the cold war. This struggle will be accelerated, and the myth of the "Soviet menace" further dissipated, as our people come to understand the profound changes and corrections of serious errors now taking place in the socialist countries. It will be helped by the continuing Soviet peace initiatives as well as by the progress being made in correcting past weaknesses and improving relations with other countries. This is bound to exert a favorable influence on the attitude toward peaceful negotiations and coexistence in labor and liberal ranks.

The immediate outlook in our country is for the further growth of broad popular movements on specific peace issues. Influential groups in labor, women's, church, Negro, farm, youth and other organizations are calling for concrete steps towards universal disarmament, especially for banning A- and H-bomb tests and withdrawing all foreign troops from all countries. There is growing opposition to the Eisenhower Doctrine. These groups and other United Nations supporters are asking that that body be strengthened by the seating of People's China.

The unprecedented rise of the Negro people's movement is closely linked with rising sympathy and support for the liberation struggles of the colonial peoples in Africa and elsewhere.

In the labor movement there has been growing differentiation on foreign policy and peace within the past few years. On the one hand certain national leaders have adopted an aggressive and rigid anti-coexistence, anti-Geneva position. On the other hand, the sentiment of the majority of the rank and file has found expression in varying degree in the position of other leaders of important international unions, and in a number of trade union publications. These leaders and publications criticize the more aggressive aspects of Washington's foreign policy and urge negotiations, curbing the A- and H-bombs, support

of anti-colonial struggles, expanded foreign economic aid and various forms of peaceful competition with the lands of socialism.

There is growing concern in the labor movement on the question of economic aid to underdeveloped countries. In contrast to Meany's anti-coexistence position, Reuther's 10-point program for aid envisages joint action through the UN by the USA and USSR. Such proposals, along with a program for expansion of East-West trade and exchange of delegations, can win broad support in labor and liberal political circles.

Such movements as these will bring to bear the influence of labor and the other main sectors of the American people upon the foreign and domestic policies of the new Administration and Congress. They will help realize the new perspectives of peaceful coexistence.

## II. THE PATH AHEAD

The principal obstacle to all advance of the American people today, as in the past, is their traditional enemy: The Monopolies. Blocking the path to the new great advances possible today stands Big Business. The giant trusts through their control of the overwhelming majority of American production dominate the economic and political life of our country.

While Big Business has been increasing its domination of the economic system in the postwar years, it is by no means inevitable that it should continue having its way in the political life and direction of the country. The workers, farmers, Negro people, small businessmen and professionals, who suffer directly from the exploitation and depredations of Big Business compose the overwhelming majority of the American people. They have the potential political strength, if united in a great coalition, to curb the power of Big Business far more even than in the heyday of the New Deal.

The formation of an anti-monopoly coalition, led by labor, and the election of an anti-monopoly coalition government which would effectively curb the power of Big Business is our main strategic aim in the period ahead. The accomplishment of this aim will signify a new stage in the relation of class forces. It will open the path to realization

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

267

of the American ideal of government of the people, by the people, for the people.

Labor, the farmers, the Negro people, and small business are already in actual struggle against the monopolies. Increasingly—though still inadequately—they have been seeking and giving one another mutual support. The idea long cultivated by monopoly propaganda that the interests of these natural allies are contradictory has been proved false.

Political cooperation based upon mutual economic interests and interdependence between labor and the farmers has registered big gains in the past period. In a number of states, such as North Dakota, Iowa, Oregon, South Dakota and Montana, labor-farmer cooperation has been maturing rapidly. The main joint effort has been to defeat the "right-to-work" laws menacing labor and to support the farmers' demands for full parity. In such industries as farm equipment and meat packing, labor and farmers have made common cause against the squeeze of the trusts.

The labor-Negro alliance, despite certain strains, remains a foundation stone of the people's strength. A million and a half Negro workers belong to the trade unions, and the Negro people refuse to be moved from their support of trade unionism. On the other hand, labor gives a growing measure of support to the struggles of the Negro people, and tens of thousands of trade unionists are members of the NAACP.

So far, however, the struggles of these great popular forces are not united. They remain only at the stage of limited mutual support. Yet labor, the farmers and the Negro people, together with the small business people and professionals, constitute the actual majority of the American people. The central task facing the American people in their struggle against the giant force of monopoly is to bring about great unity of action in the struggle for their common objectives.

In the course of the struggle for these objectives the forces of the people could develop their common action and move towards the formation of an anti-monopoly coalition strong enough to curb the power of the monopolies by effectively resisting their offensive and enacting measures:

a) To establish the sovereignty of the Nation over its most vital facilities;

268 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

- b) To limit the economic concentration and power of the trusts;
- c) To reduce their incredibly swollen share of the national wealth.

Common action could realize such demands already current in the labor and people's movements as:

- a) Return the scandalous "give-aways" (Tidelands oil, etc.) to the government;
- b) Plug up the notorious loopholes in the income and corporate tax structure through which the monopolies and their magnates evade the major portion of their taxes; raise the capital gains tax and the income tax in the higher brackets;
- c) Enforce the anti-trust laws so that instead of being merely a nuisance to the trusts and a bonanza for the legal firms, they function as actual deterrents to monopoly profiteering and concentration;
- d) Expose and prohibit the functioning of Big Business lobbyists in buying and dictating legislation in Congress;
- e) Nationalize the atomic energy industry, and all public utilities with full safeguards for the wages and conditions of the workers as well as the right to organize and strike.

The historic struggle of the American people for public power takes on wholly new dimensions today in the light of atomic energy. This vast new source of power was developed out of the public resources of the American people in wartime. It cannot be allowed to remain a private domain of the trusts, subject to their notorious greed and obstruction. The immense scope of this development, the inherent dangers, and the widespread economic effects all require that it be subjected to public control through the nationalization of the industry. In recent months the AFL-CIO has been demanding the partial restoration of public control over the peacetime use of atomic power.

Inevitably Labor, as the basic antagonist of Big Business in modern America, will prove to be the giant force around which all other anti-monopoly elements will gravitate and to which they will look for leadership. While such a perspective is not consciously recognized in most sections of labor's leadership, nevertheless, there is growing appreciation of this outlook within its ranks, as well as among other sections of the people. Over the past years labor has been playing an increasing role in the life of the nation. With the recent AFL-CIO merger it has placed itself in a position to play a still greater role.

MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

269

The struggle to curb the monopolies cannot be properly developed unless the growing coalition also finds its way towards effective political expression. In the course of the campaign to organize the mass production industries, labor became increasingly aware of the fact that the defense of the interests of the workers and of their unions requires the extension of the struggle to legislative and political action. This has become a permanent feature of the labor movement.

Independent political action of labor has been developing in various forms. Such activity under the leadership of PAC, LLPE and more recently the united body, COPE (Committee on Political Education), as well as by unions directly, takes the form of national and state legislative conferences, delegations to Washington and state capitals, participation at important levels of the major political parties—in most cases the Democratic Party—and large scale electoral activity. The recent regional conferences of COPE have initiated a new campaign broader than ever before to secure registration by union members and their families and to distribute millions of copies of the voting records of Congressmen and Senators.

Most important, labor is taking steps in a number of places (notably in Detroit) to organize its own congressional district structure. If developed more broadly, this would represent a qualitatively new forward step on the road of independent political action.

Labor, the Negro people, the farmers and small business, as they confront the bi-partisan maneuvering with their most essential demands, are giving more and more thought to the problem of political realignment. This is taking the form at present of a new re-grouping of their forces to combat the most reactionary elements, in certain cases within the GOP, but especially within the Democratic Party.

In Michigan, labor joined with liberal Democrats to oust the reactionary old guard from control of the Democratic state machine. In Texas labor joined with other popular forces, as well as conservatives, to break the grip of the Shivers Dixiecrats on the state Democratic Party. In Louisiana, labor, in parallel action with the Negro people and other democratic forces, helped secure the defeat of the extreme Dixiecrats and the partial repeal of the state "right-to-work" law.

It is out of such experiences, developing in the states, that the heightened consciousness of the need for political realignment will grow. The situation varies greatly from state to state. The possibility

of the labor and popular forces gaining decisive influence in a number of key Democratic Party state organizations in the future, coupled with a growing collaboration of independent and liberal Republican political movements, may determine the form in which a new anti-monopoly party emerges. For in the long run the working class and its allies will have to have their own anti-monopoly coalition party capable of bringing about the eventual election of a people's anti-monopoly government.

Among those who are seeking a political realignment, some see the possibility of transforming the Democratic Party into such an anti-monopoly coalition party. They believe it possible to oust the Dixiecrats, break down the influence of Big Business, win over liberal Republicans and establish a coalition leadership of labor, farmers, Negro people and small business.

Some, on the contrary, see the Democratic Party nationally inevitably continuing under the control of Big Business, surrendering to or compromising with the Dixiecrats, vacillating or retreating on labor and other democratic issues. They believe this will make it necessary for labor and its allies to break away in order to form a new mass labor-farmer party.

It is wrong to assume that the *only* possible form of political realignment is a labor-farmer party. This rigid assumption can only serve to hamper the actual development of labor's independent political action. At the present moment the task of the progressives is not to prejudge the form of the eventual political realignment. The expansion of labor's independent political role and all serious efforts to transform the Democratic Party by ousting the Dixiecrats and undermining the influence of Big Business, help create the pre-conditions for a new political alignment under labor's leadership, whatever its form. At the same time, the widest and most extensive education for the formation of a new party led by labor facilitates labor's current struggle to influence the situation within the Democratic Party. For it demonstrates that labor is not forever committed to the Democratic Party and will eventually, in one way or another, build a new political home for itself and its allies.

But irrespective of these viewpoints, the struggle to build the people's anti-monopoly coalition and to achieve its effective independent political expression must be carried forward. It must be carried



MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

271

forward regardless of which major party controls the Administration and Congress.

The significance of the 1956 election is by no means limited to the fact that the GOP lost the Congress and the Democrats lost the Presidency. Beneath the surface were deep-going movements of labor, the Negro people and the farmers which could find expression only in a limited, distorted way in the two-party electoral battle.

The election outcome in a number of states, such as Michigan and Washington, was influenced by a marked growth in labor's political activity, expressed especially in the work of COPE, although in many other places labor continues to lag in political action.

Large sections of Negro voters moved into the Republican column as a result of Democratic refusal to break with the Eastland Dixiecrats.

The growth of labor-farmer collaboration in the farm and Western states brought about the defeat of a number of reactionary Republicans west of the Mississippi.

Labor faces new challenges and new opportunities. For the growing contradiction between pre-election promises and post-election deeds, requires, as never before, the expansion into all areas of labor's independent political action.

While Eisenhower exploited to advantage the universal desire of the people for peace, the Eisenhower Doctrine deeply disturbs wide sections in all walks.

While Eisenhower reaped a harvest of votes from amongst growing numbers who recoil against the Dixiecrats, and who demand 100% full coverage of the Constitution to the Negro people, his post-election failure to tackle the South as the Nation's number one problem of democracy gives rise to ever-growing dissatisfaction.

The Democrats captured both houses of Congress as a result, among other things, of widespread dissatisfaction over GOP failures to halt inflation and to lower taxes. The people now expect Congress to deliver on long-deferred promises to cut taxes, curb high profits and high prices.

While labor defeated many anti-labor Congressmen, control of Congress remains in the hands of the reactionary anti-labor bloc of Dixiecrats and die-hard Republicans. It is this bloc which prevents not only civil rights legislation, but also legislation on wages and

hours, housing, health, taxation, federal aid to education, public power, social security, anything of an advanced or progressive nature. It is this bloc which upholds Taft-Hartley, the Smith and McCarran Acts, the "right to work" laws, the Un-American Committees.

It is this bloc which promotes the cold war and aggressive foreign policies.

It is this bloc which keeps the South unorganized and at the mercy of the Eastlands. This bloc is the guarantee of Dixiecrat minority rule in the Congress and hence in the nation. It is this bloc which is the means whereby the two-party system at present affects the will of the reactionary imperialists. The Dixiecrats are the weakest, most vulnerable section of this bloc, the most obvious and immediate enemies of labor and the Negro people.

It is this bloc which has launched new and menacing anti-labor "investigations" paralleling dangerous Taft-Hartley persecutions under the Justice Department, confronting the labor movement with the need for a new initiative in defense of its gains and of democratic rights generally.

The 1956 elections and developments in Congress since then have raised more sharply than ever the need to oust the Dixiecrats, the need for a new political realignment. More and more do events of the day impel the labor movement to take commanding positions in the great endeavor for political realignment.

But to be successful in this historic struggle for realignment, it becomes necessary for labor, in collaboration with the Negro people and farmers, to develop an independent program, an independent policy, an independent position, which is advanced both within the two-party arena of struggle, in the Democratic Party in particular, as well as outside it, through labor's own, independent political organization.

Hand in hand with the development of a people's anti-monopoly coalition, and indispensable to it as its chief dynamo, the *emergence of the American working class at long last as an independent political force in the life of our nation* stands out as an historic task on which depends the further social progress of our country.

There are growing signs that awareness of this great need is developing in the labor movement. A decade ago the voice which called for a conference of labor, the Negro people and other forces to

MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

273

formulate and advance an independent people's program for the country was a voice in the wilderness. Today, the number of unions calling for such a conference is growing apace as the political necessities become clearer and the need more evident.

Innumerable opportunities face the forces of labor and the people to advance the anti-monopoly coalition and promote labor's independent political role in the many local, state and national struggles that are being waged on the community, shop, legislative and electoral level, before, during and after the 1957 local and state elections.

If it is to advance, this struggle will also have to overcome a number of road blocks and bring about certain long overdue democratic reforms. These are necessary to correct abuses which have developed in our system of government and operate to thwart even that degree of majority rule which is possible under the present political parties.

Outstanding among these reforms are:

- a) Federal guarantee of the right to vote in all elections without discrimination;
- b) Abolition of the seniority system in Congressional committees;
- c) Amendment of Senate Rule 22 so as to make possible the ending of a filibuster;
- d) Abolition of gerrymandering by state legislatures in laying out the size and boundaries of Congressional districts, as well as in representation to state legislatures, in order to correct inequities in representation as between urban and rural areas and to assure the right of the Negro people to full representation;
- e) Abolition of the electoral college and election of the President by direct popular vote;
- f) Elimination of legal obstacles to placing minority parties and independent candidates on the ballot; adoption of proportional representation;
- g) Introduction in all states of initiative, referendum and recall.

The struggle to bring about a political realignment, based on the formation and election to power of an anti-monopoly coalition led by labor, is the great strategic task of the next stage in the democratic and social advance of the American people. It is the giant corporations which block the path to economic progress, civil rights, fuller democracy and durable peace. It is their challenge that must be met by

the American people as they carry forward their struggle under the new conditions of today.

Many questions of the content of the anti-monopoly coalition, and especially of labor's role in relation to it, remain unanswered. In order for our Party to make its maximum contribution towards helping the labor movement emerge as an independent political force and thereby promote the progress of the anti-monopoly coalition, it is necessary to determine the present level of development of the working class as distinguished from the '30's and '40's; the character of its labor movement; its present-day program; the direction in which it is moving; the chief ideological questions confronting it; how it can develop heightened political consciousness in the course of economic and other struggles, and many other questions.

Towards this end, the National Committee shall organize a series of regional conferences bringing together National Committee members and representative groups of industrial workers for a common searching into these matters, on the basis of which it shall organize either an extraordinary national conference or a special enlarged National Committee meeting devoted to working out and resolving these problems in their most essential basic aspects.

### III. COMMUNISTS AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT\*

The merger of the AFL and the CIO has greatly increased the strength of the organized working men and women of this country. This movement of 18 million workers has great power to advance the economic interests of themselves and their families, and, if properly employed, great power to stand at the head of a people's movement for the defeat of the reactionary policies of the big monopolies and for taking the high road to a better life for the American people.

Labor is displaying new vigor in economic struggles. Its growing maturity is expressed in its increased concern for demands and issues presented by other sections of the population. Labor forces interest

---

\* Owing to lack of time, the Convention was unable to act on the Draft Trade Union Resolution and referred this section of the Main Resolution to the incoming National Committee, instructing it to finalize this section of the Main Resolution at a National Trade Union Conference to be held in the near future.

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

275

themselves in community relations of all kinds and are beginning to form alliances with other sections of the population—both for labor's program and also for a people's program.

While these 18 million organized workers today constitute a greater numerical force than the eight million of the 1930's, they did not grow up in the same experiences of class struggle. The workers in the '30's went through the great unemployed struggles. They knew the open shops and they learned the lessons of class struggle in the bitter battles to organize the mass production industries. For many workers today, union membership is often little more than a condition of employment.

The chief antagonists of labor, the monopolies, strengthened by grabbing imperialist super-profits, have also increased their power, by forming new mergers and more powerful combines, by the Cadillac Cabinet's anti-labor orientation, by their stranglehold on the economic life of the country. Because they fear the growing strength of the labor movement and its new alliances and community responsibility, they will continue to try to cripple labor's economic and political activity through anti-labor legislation (the Taft-Hartley law, "right to work" laws), through monopoly-dominated government agencies, and legislation restricting labor's political rights. They carry on a battle of ideas directed toward "brainwashing" the class feelings out of the workers on the one hand, while on the other they attempt to arouse the hostility of non-labor sections of the public against trade unions. In the name of combatting inflation, they are getting ready to resist the continuing wage demands of the workers.

The fight for a higher standard of living is at the heart of the everyday existence of the trade unions. Insecurity casts its shadow over the present "prosperity." The people are loaded down with installment and mortgage debts. Between two and three millions of workers are totally unemployed. Millions more cannot get a full week's work, and there are "pockets of unemployment," areas where joblessness has become critical and lasting. Compounding all this is the fear that the advance of automation will cost the jobs of millions more.

Automation is leading to increased productivity and the beginnings today of the displacement of labor. Workers everywhere are uneasy about the future of their jobs. Herbert Hoover, Secretary

## 276 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

Humphrey, James Carey, have all expressed their concern about the possibility of an economic setback. This has created demands among the workers for a program of job security, involving GAW, much larger pensions and severance pay programs and a deep concern for job security in terms of the entire economy.

The employers count on day-to-day introduction of speedup, cutting of rates, cutting of crews and other devices to increase the exploitation of the workers. The workers are correctly not limiting the struggle in the shops to the once-in-three years contract struggle. In the basic industries, in the auto shops, in the steel mills, the fight against such grievances is the heart of union activity as the workers see it. It reflects the class struggle at its roots.

The American workers are not taking all this lying down. They are aggressively advancing new demands: annual wages, supplementary unemployment benefits, the shorter work week, new sights on health and welfare, pensions and severance pay.

The search by labor for more lasting answers to these problems is giving rise to a variety of proposals. The sum total of many of these could comprise a program of action. Some of the main points are:

1) *Further Development of Trade Union Unity.* The advances towards eliminating jurisdictional quarrels and craft-industrial differences, the merger of a few international unions, important progress in state mergers, examples of joint organizing and negotiating activity—these meet with hearty approval by the workers. They feel that unresolved problems must not be permitted to prevent united activity.

There is a growing consciousness that Negro-white unity is the bedrock for the advance of the whole labor movement. Every blow aiding the elimination of discrimination strengthens unity.

All-embracing unity requires tackling in a similar spirit the special problems of skilled workers. It requires an appreciation of the need for united action with a large segment of workers in independent unions. Attention is also needed for the problems of women and young workers who play a decisive role in many industries and yet do not take their proper role in the life of the unions.

The racketeering, gangsterism and undemocratic practices plaguing some sections of labor stand astride the path of unity. Doing injury to labor's reputation with the general public, they retard the formation of a coalition of labor and its allies. We greet the new de-

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

277

termination on the part of the labor movement to cut out this malignancy as shown in proceedings initiated by the Ethical Practices Committee of AFL-CIO. At the same time, there is a grave danger for the rights of all labor in the decision of the AFL-CIO policy statement recommending removal of trade union leaders who use the Fifth Amendment in investigations before Congressional Committees. For while the workers correctly wish to curb and end racketeering in unions, it is a serious mistake and harmful to deprive labor of its constitutional rights and thereby to deprive it of the means of defense against witchhunting and labor-busting employers and their stooges in Washington.

There are a number of practical tasks which can help develop unity. Common programs can be worked out among competing unions for organization of the unorganized particularly in the South. Joint conference board meetings can be held of unions organized in the same chain. Joint negotiations can take place where more than one union has a contract with a single employer. Such steps, for which there is already some experience, would in a practical way contribute to solidifying trade union unity.

In addition there are the contributions that can be made to overcome the obstacles to the merger of the city and state federations; the move to encourage the amalgamation of unions in any single industry and finally unity and parallel action of all kinds on all issues that advance labor's interests.

2) *Organization of the Unorganized.* Millions of workers are in the open shops. The non-union low-paying shops of the South stand as a threat to the wage standards of organized workers. The South is also the source of much of the anti-labor legislation and of the so-called "right to work" laws. The South, with its jimcrow system rivets reactionary monopoly domination upon the whole country. Organizing the unorganized in the South would bring in its train a whole fresh democratic upsurge in the country. Yet the job has not been begun in spite of many declarations by the leaders of AFL-CIO.

The recent decision of the AFL-CIO to launch a mass organizing drive of non-production workers in industry is a necessary task and possible of achievement. But it cannot be regarded as a substitute for the decisive task of organizing the unorganized in the South.

3) *The Demand for the Shorter Work Week.* More and more

278 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

unions are placing this demand for a shorter work week with no reduction in pay as their chief answer to the problems of insecurity and of advancing automation.

Big Business with its false propaganda that automation will increase the number of jobs, and that the country faces a "labor shortage" in the period ahead, is preparing to do battle against this demand. Conscious of the fundamental nature of this demand especially in a period of economic instability and the rise of a radically new technology, Communists give their wholehearted support to its realization through economic and political action.

4) *Extension of Alliances Between Labor and Its Allies.* Unions have begun more and more to participate in the struggles of the Negro people and the farmers. There is an increasing recognition that their ability to achieve trade union objectives is bound up with the struggle of all democratic forces in the country. The expansion of cooperation between labor and these groups, the increased activity of the unions on Education, Health, Civil Rights and other questions, will bring closer the realization of a people's coalition.

5) *Greater Independent Political Activity.* The unification of labor has given a new quality to its political activity. COPE's political activity has helped to produce a more independent and outspokenly critical attitude, and has increased labor's influence in the Democratic Party. The growth of this influence on the part of labor was observed in the recent period in the role of the UAW in Michigan and in the influence of organized labor in the California Democratic Party organization. A minor but noteworthy fact too is that a few prominent labor leaders have recently made reference to the possibility of a new party to be led by labor. More decisive participation on the part of the 18 million organized workers and their families, more energetic intervention by the unions in political life, is the prime requisite for creating a new political alignment in the country, through which labor, the farmers and the Negro people will best beat back the monopolists and lay the basis for a better America.

In this connection, labor can most effectively develop its independent political activity by involving the membership of the unions in support of the legislative program of AFL-CIO, around questions of anti-labor legislation, such as the state "right to work" laws, state



## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

279

legislation of supplementary unemployment benefits and increase of benefits, the struggle for tax reduction, etc.

6) *Towards Peace in the World and a Peace-time Economy.* There is a wholesome debate in the labor movement on foreign policy. It reflects the pressure of the workers' desire for lasting peace and secure peace-time jobs as against those in the labor leadership who go along with Dulles' Big Business foreign policy. Proposals and actions from some international unions around an "Atoms for Peace" program, economic aid (without strings) to underdeveloped countries, for peaceful competitive coexistence, banning of A- and H-bomb tests, and an end to the threat of atomic war—these represent a response to the workers' sentiments. However, this is not the dominant trend. What is dominant in the AFL-CIO leadership is a trend bitterly hostile to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. This infects their attitude on all aspects of foreign policy and runs contrary to the desire for peace of their own members and the public at large. This dominant trend equates negotiations with "appeasement," keeps an iron curtain between workers of our country and workers of socialist lands and rejects the possibility of peaceful coexistence.

Under the hammering of the debate, under the influence of the Geneva Conference, under the impact of the membership's desire for peace, the cold war outlook was compelled to give some ground. However, the drive of the State Department to give support to the movement to overthrow socialist governments, to put across the Eisenhower Doctrine for intervention in the Mid-East and to attempt a general retreat back to the cold war, has had an effect on some of the leaders of the labor movement. Some of them have joined the campaign for so-called "liberation." In spite of these negative developments, the workers' desire for peace can restore the movement for peaceful coexistence on the basis of the positions already taken by AFL-CIO and many of its affiliates.

There is a basis for such a movement among workers. It lies in their fear that the Eisenhower Doctrine may lead to a new Korea in the Middle East. It lies in their concern about not getting involved in the internal struggles of Eastern Europe to the point of world war. It lies also in the fact that some unions have called for limiting armaments and ending H-bomb tests. It can be developed on the basis of workers' fear of the economic and social consequences of the war pro-

gram, such as the high taxes. A movement based on the above can set roadblocks in the path of the Wall Street war makers and open the road to a second Geneva.

7) *Trade Union Democracy*. In the course of the past two decades, a vast trade union structure has developed which tends to exclude the rank and file from the affairs of the union and in defense of their day-to-day shop conditions. Contracts, once relatively simple, are now replete with hundreds of complicated, procedural, delaying clauses, particularly those dealing with the grievance procedure. Company security clauses, penalization clauses, long term contracts, union time study "experts" who do not oppose company production standards—all make it more difficult for the workers to carry on the daily struggle in the shop.

As a result, the full fighting strength of the union is not mobilized in forcing the company to improve conditions within the shop. Faced with piling up of grievances and increased exploitation, the workers in many shops are now searching out ways to rally and to fight the companies in spite of these restricting influences. All this forces the workers to struggle for greater participation in the affairs of the union. It forces them to search for new ways to utilize the union machinery for their struggle against the companies. The recent "raise in dues" and election struggles in Steel bear this out. The struggle to increase trade union democracy by the greatest participation of the rank and file is a decisive prerequisite for further substantial advance by the trade union movement.

Such is the general outline of a long range program shaping up out of the economic and political facts of life pressing upon the labor movement. One cannot say, however, that there exists any wide recognition that the acceptance of this program and its implementation, would make the trade union movement the leading component of the people's anti-monopoly coalition. This important ingredient of understanding has as yet not developed.

We of the Communist Party will do our best to contribute to the clearest grasp of these questions. We will do our utmost, side by side with the workers, to help achieve the successful outcome of these new undertakings by our participation in struggles and by helping to give them a conscious direction and purpose.

The Communist Party has made significant contributions to

MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

281

labor's history. Communists pioneered for industrial unionism and organization of the unorganized in basic industry. Unemployment insurance was once called "red" because Communists first fought for it. To many hard-fought strikes the Communists contributed support and leadership. Long before the labor movement achieved its present stature, Communists urged independent political action, unity of labor, unity of Negro and white. We always stressed the common interests of the workers of all countries and the need to unite for their common goals. These ideas and proposals played a part in the formation and growth of CIO, and in the forward movement of AFL. Millions of workers tested in life many of the ideas and slogans first advanced by the Communists. This has been a recognized contribution of the Communist Party to labor.

At the close of World War II American Big Business thought it had its golden opportunity to boss the world and beat down the workers at home. The American workers fought back in a tremendous wave of successful postwar strikes.

But Big Business achieved some sinister successes. They were able to put over the idea of imminent "Soviet aggression" and "subversion" as a cover-up for their own aggressive schemes. With the hysteria-mills working full blast, they began to weaken labor militancy and unity by stimulating attacks on Communists and Left-progressive workers. This made it easier for them to put across their anti-labor legislation.

It was a service to the labor movement and the American people that we Communists exposed and gave warning of the real objectives of Big Business. Yet we recognize that in exposing these real aims, in trying to help the labor movement to fight back, we Communists made some serious and harmful mistakes. The leadership of the Party was mostly responsible for these errors and often imposed them over the resistance of the Party membership in industry.

In spite of our long years of participation in the leadership of outstanding economic struggles, we failed to remember that the unions are in the first place organizations dedicated to the improvement of economic conditions. We assumed that the political questions most important in our minds were most immediate in the minds of the workers. We failed patiently to make clear the connections between the day-to-day struggle of the workers and these same issues.

## 282 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

In pursuing this attitude, we exaggerated our influence and support. We did not realize that a union might elect some Left forces to the leadership without being a Left union. In the difficult postwar period many important labor leaders, with whom we had worked harmoniously, began to go along with many phases of the Government-Big Business foreign policy outlook. They influenced the big majority of the unions' membership in the same direction.

With our somewhat inflated estimates of our base, we proved inflexible when the times called for flexibility in tactics. On too many occasions when ruptures had become probable, we helped to make them inevitable.

The expulsion of the progressive-led unions from C.I.O., for example, was part of an organized campaign led by *certain* labor leaders with the approval, if not under the direct instigation of the State Department, to split the trade union movement and guarantee support to the cold war. As correct as was our struggle for peace and independent political action, *our inflexible insistence on the adoption of a third party perspective and a condemnation of the Marshall Plan* facilitated the objectives of the cold war splitters.

For their part, the progressive-led unions fought bravely and well. Despite the violence of the attacks against them, their fight for policies of peace, civil liberties and civil rights, and on economic questions, gave heart to many workers, and stirred other sections of labor. Unfortunately, within these unions the struggle to re-unite the labor movement—a demand getting increasing response from the workers—did not command the same energetic attention. The split took its deadly toll.

We Communists failed to pursue policies *after the expulsions* that could have led in the least possible time to re-unification.

The workers then, as now, faced harsh and immediate economic problems. Here above all was the basis for a fight on our part for continuing class relations with masses of workers. This would have favorably influenced efforts to continue a minimum united front even with the leadership.

The kind of mistakes we have been discussing are *left-sectarian errors*. These mistakes were reflected generally and did injury to the fine tradition of our Party as the outstanding advocate of trade union unity.

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

283

In this postwar period, our thoughts, interests and concern began to center around those in the labor movement who agreed with our point of view, rather than on the essential but infinitely more difficult task of resolutely fighting to unite all labor to meet employer attacks. While we were quite correctly concerned with the most dynamic section of labor—the CIO—our concern got to be one-sided. In fact, we ignored a consideration of the problems of the majority of the workers in the AFL. This was particularly true after the unjustified expulsion of the progressive-led unions from the CIO in 1949.

After the 1952 elections, as demands for unity became more intense, our Party more energetically called for *united labor action* as a *step* in the direction of *labor unity*. This call, valid as it was, nevertheless did not measure up to what was needed. Hobbled by our estimate of the political situation and our evaluation of the trade union leadership, our call for united action was in effect suggesting a pre-unity "trial period" which workers felt had long since passed. In the absence of a real and sustained fight for trade union unity, many comrades in the Party were unprepared for the rapidity with which organic unity was achieved between the AFL and the CIO. A few even felt that this was in fact a State Department "plot," not warranting our support. Hence, as a consequence of our back-sliding on this question, the Communists, the traditional and most forceful proponents of such unity, had little to contribute to realize the full potential of organic unity when the merger of AFL and CIO finally came about.

As a result of the postwar attacks, taken together with our own errors, the Party today does not have the influence among workers it had in past years. Today, some union leaders feel called upon to vie with each other in expressing their opposition to the Party and Communism. Innumerable constitutional provisions bar Communists from membership or from holding office in many unions. There is a fear among many workers to knowingly associate with us. In spite of this, there have been some changes taking place in the most recent period. The easing of tensions on a world scale as well as the correction and overcoming of a number of the fore-mentioned errors, is making it possible for Communist workers to participate on a more normal basis in the trade union activity of their shops and local unions. In some instances, new coalitions, including workers long known as Left-wingers, have been formed. This trend towards fuller unity, especially at

the local union level, has been growing. While this is true, the abnormal and harmful attitude towards the Communist Party as such on the part of the labor leadership and most workers, still prevails. This is of no help to the labor movement itself.

An examination of the work of our Party in the last period shows that we have a considerable distance to go to eliminate the mistakes of the past. These errors are the responsibility of the Party leadership. They penetrated deep into the organization. Therefore, many hangovers of the past still remain. We particularly need a firmer effort to eliminate sectarian "oppositionist" policies not based on program, and to develop a clearer understanding for ourselves and others on the relationships between the Party and the trade unions. We have been very slow to overcome our errors in the field of trade union policy. This only emphasizes the need for closer relations between the Party leadership and the workers in our Party. The experience of these comrades emphasizes that *the main thing for the Party is work at the shop level, that trade union work is above all shop work, concern about what is happening in the departments, the grievances, the thinking and discussion there, the problems of developing one's base there.* It requires an end to the "departmentalization," the separation of industrial problems from the leading committees.

\* \* \* \*

In this spirit we must examine the trends in the labor movement, and the conceptions on which we have heretofore based our analysis.

We should free ourselves from the frozen "political labels" of "left," "right," "center." For some time now such characterizations have not given a valid picture of what has actually been happening. These conceptions were no longer levers of our understanding; we failed to see, study and assess the new changes, the shifts, the differentiations that were shattering all "compartments" and dissolving old "labels."

On this score there are profound lessons for us in the merger itself. The sharp diversity of views that existed prior to the merger, and which still exists, was *not* an insurmountable barrier to unification and has not prevented the subsequent advance of unity. In relation to the struggle for Negro rights, the fact that there were what we have called "left," "right," and "center" views, did not prevent the

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

285

merger convention from unanimously electing two Negro vice-presidents. *Therefore, the overwhelming unity of the most diverse elements in labor is possible of achievement on decisive questions.* The best way to contribute to that unity is not to "pigeon-hole" the various forces, but to see their many-sided character in relation to each specific issue. Above all we must bear in mind that life and struggle compel changes. The movements of the millions of workers, their growing consciousness and will, are the primary force for welding the unity of membership and leadership around the major tasks.

The use of old formulas led some progressives and some in our own ranks to hold the opinion that the merger of leaderships of AFL and CIO would result in nothing but a "reactionary combination." Those who came to such a conclusion took no account of the movement of millions of workers, and what large numbers of them expected and demanded of the merger.

Most of the trade union leaders in AFL-CIO are staunch defenders of capitalism. This affects their view on all questions even though they are often impelled by the offensive of the employers and the struggle of the workers to oppose the capitalists. However, it causes them to hesitate and backtrack even on slogans like that of the 30-hour week. They tend in the direction of uncritical support of the Democratic Party.

Such trade union leaders are caught in a contradiction between their staunch support for capitalism and the need of the workers to engage in sharp battle against the employers' offensives. Often the leaders themselves are threatened with extinction by these offensives against the unions. Therefore, to maintain themselves and to retain their base, they must, often in spite of themselves, engage in and lead sharp struggles, however unwelcome such struggles may be to them.

But this in itself further confirms the idea that the corporations, and not these trade union leaders, are the main enemy against whom the main blow must be struck. The path to victory lies in the fullest mobilization of the rank and file on the main issues—shop conditions, civil rights, peace, independent political action—against the monopolists and their political agents in Washington. On the basis of a full mobilization on such issues will it be possible often to develop movements including many reluctant leaders of the trade unions, who, while they deplore class struggle, must at the same time retain their

connections with the workers. That is why freezing people into categories of "center" or "right" with the idea that they cannot be budged into a position of struggle on concrete questions can prove—and has proved—very harmful in developing the widest unity in the actual course of the struggles of labor.

At the same time, one must take into account that when some of these labor leaders, in the course of the struggle, take the side of the employers on specific questions, such as speed-up in the mills or sponsorship of wage cuts, the consistent struggle against the employers forces the rank and file into conflict with these trade union leaders. This is true in principle of political questions as well, although there is no movement of the rank and file to the same degree as on economic questions. Failure to take note of this can lead to serious right opportunist errors and to isolation from the mass militant movement of the rank and file against such leadership.

*What is new, what is important, what must be seen for valid judgment is that there is a great deal of fluidity: the leadership do not group themselves in identical fashion in relation to all questions.*

Lines have not fully hardened, although certain general tendencies seem apparent. Around most of the former CIO unions and some of the AFL, there is developing a relatively more positive and militant perspective. Among leaders of the Building Trades, the Teamsters and some others, there is a more conservative trend and in some instances, reactionary points of view. This latter trend has been the major source of obstacles to the strengthening of the federation's unity and of continuing attacks on the industrial unions. Within this trend are to be found the most conservative positions on the political field, and a "go slow" attitude towards the whole federation's organizing objectives. Thereby they inhibit the activity of the merged labor movement and lessen its effectiveness.

Yet, as has been seen, on individual questions even some of these leaders can be moved to proceed in unity with the majority of the labor leadership.

On the grounds of such an estimate, which does not pre-fabricate hard and fast lines of division, the significance of the intervention of the millions of members becomes overwhelming. That intervention, based on the workers' desire to move ahead, can defeat any grouping or trend within the federation that obstructs progress on specific issues.



## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

287

What is new and different, corresponding to the new situation in our country and the world, is that the defeat of any reactionary trend and real advance in meeting unprecedented historic tasks, can only be accomplished by the struggle for an *all-embracing unity* around specific issues, a struggle that can move even some of the most reluctant. Such a unity cannot be achieved by continuing to think in old terms and to judge the present positions of leaders by the use of old labels of "left," "right," and "center."

The most conscious, active and militant workers, including those of socialist conviction, can add strength and consistency to the struggle and gain strength and support themselves by virtue of their contributions. We believe and regard as vital that there will be a new and revived Left in the American labor movement. It will emerge from militant forces which exist and assert themselves primarily on questions of economic struggle and civil rights today in many unions. Such a movement of the workers has not yet crystallized on other political questions, such as foreign policy and safeguarding democracy around which struggles will undoubtedly develop in the future. The sharpening attacks by Big Business, the urgent need and advantages for the working class of a policy of peaceful coexistence, we believe will in time stimulate the emergence of a revived and revitalized Left in this country, and it is the task of Communists to stimulate and encourage such a movement.

The body of more than two million Negro unionists, now organized within the federation, constitutes a great power for furthering the labor-Negro people's alliance. They not only compel attention to their economic demands as unionists, but also bring forward to labor the struggles of their own people for elementary democratic and equal rights. In so doing, these millions of Negro unionists give stability and depth to the alliance.

The southern organizing drive would be the single most powerful factor in welding the Negro-labor alliance in a common struggle against the Dixiecrats, who are the main obstacle to the freedom of the Negro people and the forgers of chains for labor in the halls of Congress and in the open shops of the South. The merger of these two great struggles of our times into one great common battle would mark the high point of the American people's struggle for a better America.

This developing Negro-labor alliance, however, has formidable opponents within the labor movement. Except in the South, they dare not now operate in broad daylight. But in large areas of the labor movement the Negro is still barred, if not by regulation, then by custom or practice. The leading jimcrow "bitter-enders" in labor's ranks fight policies of integration and equality for Negro workers and try to check the Federation's full participation in the surging battles around school desegregation, against the White Citizens' Councils, and for the right to vote.

This alliance is now intertwined with the very fibre of the labor movement. It makes its mark on every major policy and action of AFL-CIO. Certain of our more recent judgments of this alliance, which were founded on suspicion of the "motives" of various Negro and labor leaders—incorrect at the time—would be disastrous today.

True estimates must be based on reckoning soberly with the movement of millions of Negro workers, of the entire 16,000,000 Negro people, who have set a new time schedule for complete emancipation *now*.

The advance of the Negro-labor alliance is supremely important for the progress of labor and our nation. But its advance will not be automatic. All who see this have the prime responsibility of giving their best thought and effort in the continuing fight for its existence and furtherance. This requires a practical day to day struggle against every form of discrimination.

Keeping ever mindful that the need for supporting the desire of the Negro workers to have direct representation in the leadership of this labor movement is in the interests of all workers, we must find ways to move for and support the desire of the Negro workers to rise from the unskilled classifications. The fight for upgrading is a key fight in the shops today.

Over and above all this, there is needed the commitment of labor's full strength in support of the battles of the Negro people in the South. There is also required an alert response to the intensification of the job problems created by the new technology.

### **The Communist Party and the Trade Unions**

Even those workers who have been most influenced against us

MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

289

know that the Communists are capable of the greatest devotion and self-sacrifice. We pledge that devotion and self-sacrifice, not only to the everyday struggles of the workers, but also to helping labor accomplish those historic goals which arise out of the new era in the life of the labor movement itself.

It is not the policy of the Communist Party to interfere with, "bore from within," or to seek to capture or control the trade unions. We reject any allegation that this is our policy. We respect the complete political and organizational independence of the trade unions and other organizations of the working class. We Communists seek to influence the organized workers by persuasion, discussion and example, as we do any other section of the population. Abiding by the discipline of the union, we always favor the full involvement of the membership in policy-making as well as the activities of the unions.

Workers who are Communists are organized on the basis of their natural day-to-day working life in shops and industries. There has been a general reaffirmation of this form of organization. Along with this there is not only a desire for strengthening, but also for flexibility of application in certain areas of work.

Much has been made of the Party's emphasis on the role of workers in the most basic industries of our country—steel, auto, and the like. The word, "concentration," has been given all kinds of sinister meanings. In point of fact, the concern of the C.P. for these workers is entirely natural. Our Party is an organization of the working class. It is just these workers who are by the circumstances of their lives placed in direct conflict with big business. They constitute the largest portion of all industrial workers. Producing directly for the monopolies they daily come face to face with monopoly greed, monopoly speed-up and monopoly discrimination. American labor history has shown that it is these workers who have engaged in some of the longest and bitterest struggles. Their organization into the ranks of the CIO during the late '30's had great influence on the militancy of all labor, gave a new lift to the American labor movement.

For these reasons our Party believes that in the coming together of all those who want to curb the monopolies, these basic industrial workers will be the very bone and sinew of the movement.

We further believe that of necessity, such will be their role through all of those sharp class struggles which must precede any

peaceful changing over to socialism in our country, a transition which we envision as possible and which we want to make real. Militant trade union struggles, however, do not lead automatically to socialist consciousness. If our Party helps the workers to draw the lessons from these struggles they will begin to see that only a socialist transformation of property relations can bring about a final solution to their problems.

The Communist Party is deeply convinced that the workers of our country are that class which will lead the whole people towards a better future. This conviction leads the Communists to do all in their power to help the workers in all their struggles, to assist in organizing them, and to stand shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-unionists in the front ranks when the battle grows hot.

Others insist that we have "People's Capitalism" and that capitalists and workers are "co-partners," or have a "mutual trusteeship" for the system as a whole. Alongside such views exists a theory (often put into practice) that the workers should even "sacrifice," and by accepting lower wages or speed-up or both, assist their own employer to "compete" with others.

The point of view of the Communist Party is that of *class struggle*, and the need to support without reservation the side of the working class. Other views may be generally termed as those of *class collaboration*, and its adherents within labor also assert the need to strengthen labor's side in a collaboration that they are compelled to admit is far from tranquil. *For our part, we Communists say there is a clear basis for the unity of all those who are on labor's side* in those everyday struggles whose existence no one can deny, and whose solution demands united effort.

The Communist Party believes that the interests of the American workers are at one with the workers of other lands. We hailed world labor unity which came about as a by-product of broad anti-fascist unity, victorious in World War II. With the coming of the Cold War, the disruption of this unity, instigated by the monopolies, did harm to the aspirations of world labor. The easing of world tensions following upon the Geneva Conference gives hope for the resumption of that unity. Certainly, the far-flung nature of American Big Business with its branches and properties stretching around the world, spurs the need for international united action of the workers. The

MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

291

common objectives of the ICFTU and the WFTU, the two centers of labor on a world scale, should inspire conciliatory discussions of past differences and a fresh approach to united action and to unity.

Ours is the age of atomic energy and automation. A power of production beyond the dreams of any previous generation has come into being. Yet in our country there is not just rejoicing, there is also fear. Why should this be so? It is because deep down in the minds of millions of our countrymen is the question: will these enormous forces, monopoly-owned, result in abundance for all or further enrichment of the few and the ruin of the many? Monopoly-owned, will these gigantic productive forces mean unending peace or a war that will end all?

The people's concern is just. They have seen what was called the "industrial revolution" in our country during the '20's wind up in the colossal crash of 1929, a crash from which we did not emerge for a decade, and then only under the stimulus of a new World War. The people have seen capitalism unleash two world wars in successive generations.

Therefore an irrepressible searching for new answers is astir in America. In the labor movement it shows itself in discussion over whether atomic energy shall be privately developed and controlled or whether it shall be the government's province. It shows itself in labor's refusal to accept assurances that automation will bring nothing but good, in labor's restless search for a program to meet already-felt problems.

We of the Communist Party share in the popular feeling that there must be new answers. The labor movement has a strength that can impose demands that are unprecedented, demands required for a situation without precedent. Certainly labor is grimly determined never again to permit the full and ghastly toll of economic storms to be principally exacted from the working people. A great coalition of the people, led by labor, can achieve that goal towards which they have striven for nearly a century: to curb the monopolies by winning political supremacy.

Communists believe a socialist reorganization of our society to be the ultimate answer. We believe, to the extent that the vast new productive forces develop, they will more and more put unbearable strains on social relations that permit such forces to be owned by a handful of

monopolists and operated to serve their profit aims. Atomic energy and automation press against such restraints; they demand a social system of production for the use and benefit of all, a system possible only under the people's ownership of the means of production. Such a system, socialism, can only come about when the working people and the majority of all the people of our country have become convinced of its desirability through their own experiences and thoughts. The Communist Party seeks to further this through its advocacy of socialism, to be achieved democratically by majority will and by peaceful means.

This then is why we are convinced that there is a special role for Communists among the workers:

- For their conscious participation in the daily struggles;
- For their ability to help draw lessons from each battle and to help chart the course ahead—for an anti-monopoly coalition of labor, the farmers and the Negro people;
- For their unreserved position on the side of the workers in the class struggle;
- For their conviction of the identity of interest of the workers of our country with the workers of others;
- For their profound belief in the desirability and the inevitability of a socialist transformation of our country.

The experiences of the workers themselves as they live and fight and think deeply about their problems is the only way in which they will come to conclusions. Our Party with its scientific socialist outlook can help spark this thinking. The future of the American labor movement will also be shaped by the tremendous force for progress that has arisen from within the ranks of labor and is sweeping across many lands. For the American trade union movement is part of the labor movement of the world.

#### **IV. RALLY TO THE BANNER OF STRUGGLE FOR NEGRO FREEDOM—KEY TO STRENGTHENING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY**

The Negro people of our country are fighting with unbending will and irresistible resolve to secure now the whole measure of their

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

293

constitutional rights as free and equal citizens. The determination is dramatically portrayed in the massive battles they are waging against segregation in the South today.

Over a half million Negroes in deep Southern cities are participating daily in *organized direct actions* to break the Jim Crow barrier in bus transportation. More than a hundred thousand are engaged in organized campaigns on a single issue—to secure the right to vote; they aim to utilize the ballot as a weapon in the struggle to *desegregate and to democratize Southern life*.

Millions of Negroes the country over are giving moral and financial support to the legal battles being waged in hundreds of school districts against the Jim-Crow barriers to equal and non-segregated education. And fiercely proud and courageous Southern Negro parents commit their children to the battle. These daring boys and girls defy hate-inspired mobs to attend “desegregated” schools. They are the heroic “Young Guard” of a people fighting for their freedom.

In scope, militancy and effectiveness the Negro People’s Movement has reached a maturity unparalleled in recent generations.

This fact of glorious struggle is the most vital reality in Negro life today. Not the quantity or character of their recent gains, not even the continuing depths of their daily oppression—but *the compelling magnificence of their united struggle* is the most distinguishing and socially significant factor in the lives of 17 million American Negro people.

The Southern ruling class responds with frenzied violence to the Negro people’s insistent demands, the mass assertion of their just, human and constitutional rights. The struggle reaches a climactic phase.

Over a hundred ministers among the Negro people’s leaders have been arrested. More than a score of churches and homes of leaders have been bombed. Women have been shot on buses. Homes and cars have been fired into. The racists have spilled the blood of the protesting victims of Jim-Crow tyranny.

But the army of Negro freedom fighters stands firm. Each day new recruits join the ranks, new fronts of struggle are opened.

The massive movement and heroic struggles of the Negro people are daily etching into the consciousness of millions a new sense of the enormous import which an oppressed people’s fight for equality lends to the general cause of social progress in the nation.

Millions, hitherto indifferent, now begin to realize that the tremendous economic, political and social potential of our country can never be achieved so long as any barrier to Negro equality remains standing. Millions begin to see that the particular needs of all progressive social strata of the population are served by this urgent struggle of the Negro people. They begin to grasp the social truism that what is good for the Negro people is good for every progressive sector of white Americans—both for the fulfillment of their immediate needs and the accomplishment of their long-term aspirations.

The Negro people's leaders, therefore, serve the nation's best interests no less than their people's dire needs when they issue a call to action to all who honor our nation's democratic heritage, to all who aspire to a nobler future for our common country.

Now is the time for all progressive Americans to add the full force of their power to the great lever for democracy forged by the brave struggles of Southern Negroes. Now is the time for all believers in democracy—by strengthening and heightening even further the great Negro people's offensive against hidebound reaction—to raise to new heights the whole plane of democratic opportunity *for all* to struggle for social progress in our country.

More than this, the Negro people's struggle is an increasingly potent factor in the world-embracing battle for democratic rights in subject lands, for freedom from colonial domination, for peaceful relations among nations. The protestor against bus segregation in Montgomery and Tallahassee draws inspiration and precept from the colonial revolts of the East and the independence stirrings in Africa. He sees himself debased by the same shibboleths of white supremacy, the same imperialist arrogance and violence which would deny to Egyptians sovereignty over the Suez Canal and to Nigerians control of their rich and ancient land.

He knows, and the world knows, that the monopolists' protestations of democracy are rendered a hollow mockery by the persistence of Dixiecrat rule of the South and dominance in the federal Congress.

*The question of Negro freedom, then, is the crucial domestic issue of the day, and a factor of growing international consequence.*

The circumstances of their common oppression and the unanimous demand for equality of rights and status as American citizens are the ties that bind together all strata of the Negro population. The



## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

295

steadily growing unity of the Negro people is manifested in the continuing growth of their mass organizations and institutions, in the singularity of their basic demands, in the militancy of their advocacy and action for equal rights, in the developing coordination and collaboration between the respective organizations which constitute the Negro People's Movement.

This new strength of organization not only provides for the greater mobilization and exercise of the fighting power of Negro Americans to effect change; it also establishes the basis for more formal and equitable alliance relations with organized labor and other progressive organized formations of the general population.

The struggles of the Negro people and the resultant significant advance inspired Negro Americans with a new quality of self-confidence. A profound spirit of national consciousness and pride in their racial identification permeates the Negro people of the U.S. today. It fires their determination to build ever closer their unity in order to wage the struggle even more militantly to break down all barriers to their exercise of any and all political, economic and social rights enjoyed by any other citizens.

Negroes unite *not* in order to separate themselves from the political, economic or social life of our country. They unite to more effectively employ the strength of their own numbers and the weight of their alliance with other parts of the population *to level all barriers to their fullest integration* into all aspects of the economic, political and social life of the American people as a whole. *They are forging an internal national unity to facilitate their struggle for full integration as free and equal American citizens.*

The Negro people's movement is today's standard bearer in the struggle to open up the now-restricted areas of democracy. It is the decisive strategic ally of the working class in the current struggles for liberty and livelihood and in all stages that lead to the subsequent achievement of the necessary fundamental transformation of American society from the present capitalist exploitative system to that of socialism. Now to cement the Negro-Labor alliance, through powerful mass struggles for Negro rights, is to lay the cornerstone for that broad anti-monopoly coalition of labor and people's forces on which the progressive future of our country depends.

Against the background of this estimate of the Negro people and

their liberation movement, what are the special tasks and responsibilities of Communists? First and foremost, it is the obligation of the vanguard Party of the American working class to lend every support to the Negro people's struggle. *This is the main uncompleted democratic task of our country; and its fulfillment will enormously advance the goals of the working class and our entire nation.*

Communists are also called upon to make their maximum independent contribution towards winning the just demands of the Negro people.

It has for three decades been the honorable task of Communists to set a high standard of devotion to and energetic leadership in the fight for Negro rights. Recognizing the special national character of this question, we have raised our voices among the workers when others stood mute. We have stirred masses to battle against the barbarities of Jim Crow while others chose simply to deplore injustice from the sidelines. We have in the past often been the pace-setters when others lagged behind.

This vanguard role of the Communists in the fight for Negro freedom has been correctly based on a fundamental concept of Marxist-Leninist social science: that the working class can achieve its class aims only by wiping out the divisions and the inequities created and fostered among the workers by the Jim-Crow system of the ruling class. On this basis the Party can and must play a decisive role in forging an unbreakable link between the Negro people's movement and the organized labor movement.

In a real sense the Communist Party, with its insistence on full political, economic and social equality for the Negro people, with the example of Negro-white solidarity achieved within its own ranks, has served as an indispensable forerunner of today's tremendous struggles for freedom.

As the advance guard of the American working class, the Communist Party must continue to make its contributions to the fight for Negro rights, under the changed conditions of today, as effectively, as honorably, as it did in previous periods of struggle. The fight for Negro rights needs the contribution which Communists, guided by Marxist-Leninist theory, are in a position to make.

It is essential, therefore, that we thoroughly appraise our policies and tactics, our internal functioning and our external relations to the

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

297

cause of Negro freedom. In this connection, we must assure the early completion of the study and reassessment now under way of our previously asserted theoretical position on this question.

The primary weakness of our Party on the front of struggle for Negro rights during the past decade has been our relative isolation from the struggle. This has been partly due to the political attacks against the Party and the McCarthyite anti-Communist poison pumped into the bloodstream of the workers' movements.

It has also been due, however, to our own errors. The Party's work for Negro freedom has been hampered by doctrinaire concepts, hangovers from past periods, which have resulted in outmoded practices and a sectarian method and style of work. These sectarian practices have resulted from a failure to fully grasp the significance of the new forces, the new level of struggle and the new possibilities for victory that have become apparent in the Negro people's movement in the course of the past decade.

Another weakness has been that many comrades, Negro and white, have responded to the failures which accompany both sectarian and opportunist practices by recoiling from *any* significant participation in the Negro people's struggle, by deprecating any project which assigns to Communists a leading role in the struggle—by abstentionism. A prevalent form of this abstentionism is a lack of initiative and imaginative action in moving broad white masses to act.

A third reason for the isolation of the Party in this field of work has been the failure to establish and sustain new norms of Negro-white unity—norms which must reflect and correspond to the new level of the demands for full, not conditional, equality being advanced by the Negro liberation movement itself. These new norms must have their reflection in a higher standard of inner-party Negro-white unity.

Over the past few years, there have accumulated innumerable problems of personnel in the field of Negro work: an unsatisfactory deployment of Negro personnel in leading positions on a national and district scale; strong manifestations of bureaucratic methods in dealing with problems of Negro work and inner-party relationships between Negro and white; the failure to reflect in our Party the leading role played by Negro women in the Negro people's movement; in some cases a pronounced tendency to give insufficient at-

tention to the repeatedly-expressed views of Negro personnel; and a serious loss of Negro membership.

The improvement of the level of the Party's fight for Negro rights and the enhancing of the quality of Negro-white unity within the Party require the maximum participation of and consultation with Negro comrades at all levels of Party work in the formulation of policy and the disposition of personnel. Special measures must be taken and guarantees provided to ensure such participation.

It should always be borne in mind that the improvement of the Party's work in the struggle for Negro rights will have vitality and will succeed to the degree that it meets the needs of the Negro people and wins the support of the Negro membership in the first place, and of the membership as a whole.

A further factor tending to explain our weaknesses in the struggle for Negro rights has been the recent failure to sustain a continuous and effective ideological campaign against racism, against every manifestation of white supremacy thinking and big nation chauvinism. It has been and remains the duty of Communists to patiently and persistently point out to the workers that anti-Negro racism is the ideology of the ruling class, that its purpose and effect is to wring super-profits out of the sweat of the doubly-exploited Negro workers and to frustrate the demands of the trade unions and all workers for a greater share of their production. It has been and remains our duty to point out, without ceasing, that the racist denial of political and social rights to the Negro people of the South is the shield behind which the Dixiecrat-minded capitalists restrict the exercise of democratic rights by all Southerners and foist the reactionary rule of monopoly on the country as a whole.

Particularly in light of the upsurge for colonial independence in the East, in light of the historic achievements of the Chinese People's Republic, the emergence of India as a potent world factor, the straining of the whole African continent against centuries-old shackles, it is our responsibility to convince all sections of the American masses that the cause of Negro freedom serves the cause of world peace.

*Solid bonds of unity between Negro and white Communists and progressives can be realized and sustained when white Communists and progressives, living and working among the white masses, are engaged actively in struggle against discrimination and manifesta-*

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

299

*tions of racial prejudice.* When white Communists fail to join the struggle for Negro Americans to share in and enjoy all the rights and opportunities which they are privileged to exercise—be it in matters of employment and promotion rights, housing, cultural or recreational pursuits, of the simple amenities and courtesies of everyday relationships—then the Party forfeits its stellar role in the freedom struggle of the Negro people, the bonds of unity dissolve, suspicions and antagonisms replace mutual confidence and Party unity deteriorates.

The exploiters of the Negro people and the working class thrive upon and incessantly propagate white supremacist ideas among the popular masses; and we must equip all our members to recognize and combat this divisive ideology. To neglect or weaken the fight against white supremacy ideas or practices within the mass movement or their influences without our own ranks would constitute abandonment of principle, destruction of the foundation for Negro-white unity and the lowering of the Party's proud banner of equality and comradeship.

All Communists, and all progressive Americans, are called upon to marshal their maximum strength to enhance the liberation movement of the Negro people. This requires:

1. *Full participation in and support of the all-sided anti-segregation movement in the South.* This is a battle to remove a festering, unsightly sore from the national body politic; to free the Negro people of the unequal opportunity and the social degradation heaped upon them by a system which renders them outcasts; to enforce the Constitution of the United States as interpreted by the Supreme Court. A popular and irresistible demand must arise for Congressional action to end filibustering and pass civil rights legislation, for effective federal executive intervention to stay the murderous hands of the Southern racists, to enforce integration in all aspects of public life, in all Southern states, *now*.

2. *The strengthening and broadening of the battle for the unfettered right of suffrage for all Southerners. The right to vote and to be voted for must not be restricted by race or property.* Poll taxes, which persist in five Southern states, must be abolished. Discriminatory registration practices, aimed at disfranchising Negroes and white working people, must be ended. Intimidation and terror, still the customary

accompaniment of elections in Southern states, must cease to bar the way to the ballot box. This struggle for democratic elections in the South must be buttressed by *intensive campaigns to increase Negro representation on all levels of government, both North and South.*

3. *An intensified struggle for equal employment and upgrading practices in all industries, everywhere in the nation.* The trade-union movement will be greatly strengthened to the degree that it insists on the slogan long inscribed on its banners: equal pay for equal work. Apprenticeship training must be opened up to Negro youth on an equal basis with young white workers. The strengthening of the activities of the anti-discrimination committees of the AFL-CIO, and of international and local unions, should continue to be regarded as a matter of urgent concern for the labor movement. Special attention should be given to advancing Negro participation in the leadership of the trade-union movement at all levels. The American labor movement must be helped to understand that racism and unionism are fundamentally incompatible.

4. *The unfolding of major campaigns to break down segregation in housing.* Hemmed into the dilapidated tenements and ramshackle dwellings of our urban ghettos, the Negro masses are made the prey of merciless rent-gougers. They are thrice robbed by higher prices for inferior commodities and services in the stores of the Jim-Crow communities. Housing segregation is another barrier to the unity of Negro and white workers. Public funds spent for housing developments, whether public or private, should be administered so as to combat Jim-Crow practices and make housing available to all who need it. *Communists and progressives are called upon to lead the fight for integrated housing in the communities, neighborhood and multiple-dwelling units in which they themselves live.\**

\* The question of decent, desegregated housing is one of the most urgent life-and-death needs of the Negro people the country over and in Northern cities particularly. Within Negro communities there is an almost unbelievable degree of overcrowding, accompanied by untold human misery, disease and death from fires.

During the last census decade, 1940-50, overcrowding of Negroes increased 11 per cent. Of the nine million new dwellings built since 1953, less than 1 per cent went to non-whites, who are more than 10 per cent of the total population. In New York's Harlem alone there occur 2,500 rat bite cases a year. The pressure of a steady flow of Southern migration has made this an irrepressible focal point of the sharpest struggle. Forced into sub-standard dwellings and paying "luxury apartment" rents, and prevented by Jim-Crow and mob violence from moving from the confines of segregated areas, the Negro people demand solution of this problem now.

Jim-Crow in housing exists primarily because it is profitable to a host of parasites who make money directly out of the existence of the ghetto. This includes the rent-gouging landlords, real estate sharks, merchants and others who rob the Negro at every turn.

But the vultures are not the cause of the corpse. Nor are the greedy landlords and blood-sucking loan sharks the cause of the Negro slum. The real cause is *segregation itself*, and no

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

301

5. *Action for desegregation of public schools.* In the South this requires support of the program of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other organizations of the Negro people to accomplish desegregation of the schools in accordance with the mandates of the federal courts. It will require, in some instances, federal protection of the lives and limbs of Negro students of "desegregated" schools. In Northern communities the fight against school segregation, which is still widely maintained, involves primarily the struggle to re-district school lines on an integrated basis. Fundamental to a correction of this discriminatory practice is the fight to end Jim-Crow housing.

6. *Intensifying the ideological struggle against racism.* Since the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954, the country has been flooded with an ocean of racist literature, and television, radio and newspapers have been used in the South to saturate the minds of white masses with the false doctrine of white supremacy. The task of propagating the truth of the equality of all peoples, the necessity of convincing the white workers and the democratic masses generally that equal rights for the Negro people is a matter of their own self interest, is more urgent than ever before.

All of the class strata in Negro life have a stake in the goals of

remedy for the Negro housing question can be successful which does not come to grips with this evil.

There is good reason for the special hostility to integration in housing. For segregated housing is fundamental to the whole system of Jim-Crow in the North. It is this which perpetuates segregation in the schools, almost as effectively as if it were done by law, as well as segregation in recreational and other facilities. The existence of the ghetto slums also serves as a powerful means of feeding the myth of white supremacy, and by the same token the freedom of Negroes to live where they please would deal a powerful blow against this myth.

What is required is a large-scale program of integrated low-cost and middle income housing, built *outside* the existing Negro communities. White liberals and progressives, by undertaking in a really mass way the fight for interracial housing, can make a great contribution to the struggle against segregation and for the further democratization of American life, and at the same time strike a blow against the gouging of white as well as Puerto Rican, Mexican-American and Negro tenants and home owners by the real estate and banking monopolies.

To be really effective, a housing program must be both comprehensive and directed at the goal of eradicating segregation. And it should be carried forward by the concerted action of both Negro and white citizens dedicated to bringing it into life. It ought to occupy a high place of emphasis in the action programs of labor and all popular organizations. Such a program should include some of the following elements:

1. An extensive program of low cost housing on a non-segregated basis, and the full integration of all existing projects;
2. An end to the victimization of Negro home owners and buyers. Making credit and insurance available on reasonable terms and without Jim-Crow strings attached, whether through banks, government agencies, or other institutions;
3. Vigorous action against vandalism, bombings and other racist violence;
4. Enforcement of the building and sanitary codes, adequate collection of garbage, street cleaning services, etc., in Negro communities;
5. Positive steps to outlaw all restrictive covenants.

Such a program, if fought for in Congress, State Legislatures and City Councils, with the support of the churches, trade unions and community organizations, Negro and white, could change the segregated patterns of our cities. It would provide the foundation for a new quality of Negro-white unity, with far-ranging consequences for the social progress of the nation.

and are represented in the Negro people's movement for democratic rights and equality. Nevertheless, the Negro people are, in class composition, essentially a working people. The preponderant membership of the Negro people's mass movement organizations is of the working class and toiling farmers.

This working-class component, working side by side with white workers in shop, mine and mill, sharing in the activities of the common unions of all workers, is the guarantee that the bonds of fraternity will be strengthened between the liberation movement and the working class. Its preponderant strength in the Negro people's movement for freedom enhances the prospects for the development of this movement in conformity with the aims and interests of labor. This is the major factor which gives substance to the outlook and the program for complete integration which characterizes the Negro liberation movement today.

Similarly, because of its experience and discipline in the struggles of the American labor movement, the working-class component of the Negro freedom movement will of necessity leave its imprint of militancy and united mass action on that movement. It may be expected increasingly to influence program and tactics of the Negro liberation movement, and more and more to contribute outstanding personalities to its leadership. Our Party must base itself on this working-class strata of the Negro people.

The tactics and modes of struggle of the Negro people's liberation movement are decisively determined by the relationship of class and national forces in the nation as a whole and in the South in particular. They are also influenced and shaped by the objective class relations within the Negro people's movement and the common social and cultural life of the entire Negro people. Those forms of struggle which prevail at a given moment are likely to be those most congenial, familiar and acceptable to the Negro people themselves. Their tactics of struggle correspond to the realities of the circumstances and conditions within which the struggle unfolds.

It is therefore not the task of Communists or any other group to impose upon the Negro people new forms of struggle, tactics alien to their historic development as a people. Rather it is the task of all supporters of the Negro liberation movement, including the Communists, to lend their unreserved support to, and to take an active part



MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

303

in those programs and techniques of struggle which now embrace and propel into action the great majority of the Negro people.

*The great labor movement of our country and all democratic forces in American life are called upon to recognize in the struggle for Negro rights the decisive task before the country today. The Communist Party sees in this struggle the number one challenge to action for all Communists. It is the portal to new advances in all spheres in the fight for social progress.*

Without the enfranchisement of the Negro masses in the South the road to an anti-monopoly people's government will remain blocked by the Dixiecrat reactionaries who dominate Congressional committees by virtue of the disfranchisement of Southern masses.

The organization of the unorganized Negro workers in common unions with their white brothers in the South is the surest security against the runaway shop and the prerequisite for labor's further advance on the economic front of struggle to raise the living standards of all who work.

The plantation system, which still holds some 5 million white and Negro farm workers under barbarous conditions of exploitation and oppression, must be eradicated. In the mounting struggle for the democratic reconstruction of the South, there must be special efforts to win governmental measures to secure land and land tenure for Negro croppers, tenants and small owners, and to provide cheap credit and capital goods for agricultural cooperatives.

Equality and full integration in the economic life of the country would force the monopolies to disgorge the \$25 billion in super-profits which they now rob from the Negro people's just share of the gross national product and add to their mountainous store of privately-owned public wealth. The restoration of this \$25 billion to the Negro people must be regarded as a vital element in any sound anti-depression program in our country.

Success in the struggle for Negro freedom will add moral tone to the national democratic spirit. It will radically advance the progressive potential of the American people in determining their domestic affairs and influencing the international relations of our country in the service of democratic and peaceful relations among nations.

Much as the destruction of slavery in the South became imperative for the forward movement of our nation a century ago, so the destruc-

tion of the Jim-Crow system centering in the South has become necessary for the democratic progress of our country today. Now, as in the 1850's, ever larger sections of the American people—foremost among which is the organized labor movement—can be won as powerful allies in the struggle for Negro rights.

The Communist Party of the United States pledges itself to the accomplishment of this task.

## V. THE AMERICAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM

The people's anti-monopoly coalition would have as its central aim the improvement of the conditions of the American people and the defense and extension of their democratic rights. Its success in electing a people's anti-monopoly government would open the way to a vast and unprecedented expansion of democracy. Such a government could curb the repressive economic and political powers of the monopolies and deprive them of the ability to promote violence to frustrate the will of the people. Under such conditions, whenever the majority of the American people become convinced of the necessity of a socialist reorganization of society, they would be able to advance to their goal along peaceful and constitutional lines.

Ever since the rise of the struggle against fascism and the fascist danger in the '30's, our Party has been elaborating such a program for a peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism. In 1938, the 10th Party Convention adopted the first written constitution of the Communist Party. It expressly stated that any advocate of force and violence would be excluded from the Party.

In the succeeding years many additional steps were taken. The leading spokesmen of the Party, Chairman Foster and General Secretary Dennis, expressed this position of the Party in 1947-48 in articles, statements and interviews with such leading newspapers as the *New York Times* and *Herald-Tribune*. A high point in the presentation of this question was Comrade Foster's deposition, "In Defense of the Communist Party and Its Indicted Leaders," at the first Smith Act trial in 1949. This statement of policy was endorsed by the National

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

305

Committee of the Party. It was expressed in the Party Program, "The American Way," adopted in 1954. Comrades Dennis and Gates at the first meeting they addressed after their release from jail, at Carnegie Hall, January 20, 1956, reiterated our Party's advocacy of a *peaceful and constitutional road to socialism in our country*.

Some have challenged this view on the ground that the capitalist class of the U.S. is strong and the forces of repression at its disposal are powerful. They point to the character and sharpness of the class and people's struggle in the past and today. These points are unquestioned. The trusts will continue to try to promote demagoguery, division and force and violence to halt social progress and democratic advance.

Titanic economic and political struggles will intervene in our country before the majority of the people take the path to socialism. In the course of and as a consequence of such struggles of the working class, the Negro people and others, the power of the monopolies could be drastically curbed through the election of an anti-monopoly government. There would be a new strength, a new class consciousness and political maturity within the labor and people's movements which would also be reflected in the strength of the party or parties of socialism.

That is why we state that the possibility exists for the peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism. This transition will become possible when the majority of the American people so decide in the course of their struggles against the monopolies. Only the American people will make that decision.

This concept of our advocacy of, and endeavor to, chart a peaceful, democratic and constitutional road to socialism in America expresses what we Communists strive for. It is a further development of our established position. It embodies our basic view that socialism can be established only through a radical and fundamental extension of American democracy and a revolutionary transformation of all property relations. It emphasizes that *all* roads to socialism are roads of mass struggle, waged under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist vanguard. But now this concept takes on a new meaning in light of the profoundly new and favorable changes in our own country and in world relationships.

The history of our country, the struggles of our people to fulfill the Bill of Rights, their attachment to the Constitution all point to the

306 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

further conclusion that socialism in the U.S. will provide full civil liberties to all, including the right to dissent, and, as long as the people so desire, a multi-party system. This is not an academic question for our Party. This stand by our Party on civil liberties under socialism is of value in clarifying our perspective of socialism and also assists in strengthening the unity of the democratic forces of our land for common action today.

Socialism in America will be the realization of the dream of economic independence and political freedom, of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" under the conditions of today, in the age of atomic energy and automation. It will carry forward the best traditions of Jefferson, Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, and of the great American pioneer labor and socialist leaders, William Sylvis and Gene Debs.

Socialism is no more un-American than is capitalism particularly American. Capitalism and socialism are social systems growing out of the evolution of society and its struggle toward greater progress. Capitalism in the U.S., because of the peculiar features and historical conditions of its development, has brought a relatively high standard of living to a large number of people. But it also has brought economic crisis, wars, colonial exploitation and oppression, unemployment, insecurity, crime, social degradation and discrimination. The people had to fight for their standard of living and for their democratic liberties against the forces of privilege and reaction at every stage in the history of our country. They fought for independence, for the Bill of Rights, for the right to vote, for the right to education, for the abolition of slavery, for the rights of women, for the abolition of child labor, for the right to build unions, for social insurance. And to this day the Negro people are denied equal rights, are discriminated against, and are doubly exploited.

Today socialism, embracing a third of the world's people, has grown to a world system. In the coming period the superiority of socialism over capitalism will become ever more apparent to all peoples.

Socialism in the U.S. from the beginning will be able to provide all our people with the highest standard of living, the fullest economic security. For ours is the most technically advanced country in the world. Our resources, our skills, our technology, our organizing capacity and experience, our workers, scientists, will assure a rapidly increasing standard of living for all. Socialism in our country will bring

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

307

not only the fullest satisfaction of our material needs but also the fullest democratic liberty and cultural satisfaction.

The Communist Party from its inception has been the party of socialism. Because of this it has brought strength and understanding much greater than its numbers to the struggles in which it fought as part of the American working people. But our Party never fully mastered the task of successfully combining the immediate struggle and socialist education. In the early period policies and slogans were put forward as if socialism were around the corner. Later on, when the Party, making a more sober and realistic analysis of the situation, came to the conclusion that socialism was not on the immediate order of the day in the U.S., educational work for socialism was neglected.

This resulted from our narrow and sectarian conception of socialism, of what it would be like in the U.S. and of how it would be achieved. We failed to see in the many struggles for greater economic security, in the strong anti-monopoly tendencies, the basis for reaching the people with fundamental discussions of issues and for promoting socialist education among them.

But the enemies of socialism have never ceased their attacks and are today carrying on widespread propaganda not only against the socialist lands and against the Communist Party of the United States, but also against the ideas of socialism.

This should make clear that the Communist Party cannot limit itself to a mere declaration that socialism is not on the immediate order of the day in our land. This is undoubtedly true. But socialism is nonetheless an issue: socialism in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and most of all, what socialism would be like in the U.S. and how the Communist Party hopes the American people will achieve socialism.

The historic conditions deriving from the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and the split in the socialist movement have now given way to new conditions. The emergence of socialism from the limits of one country to a world system embracing several states and one-third of mankind was described by the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as "the chief feature of the present era."

These conditions make possible a great new trend towards unity among socialist-minded people which has already begun to be felt not

only abroad but in our own country. The new features of independence and mutual criticism in the relationships among Communist Parties also tend to remove barriers between Communists and other supporters of socialism.

For some months our Party has had under consideration the question presented in Eugene Dennis' report to the National Committee meeting last April, of our attitude towards the perspective of a united party of socialism in this country.

The new developments point to a certain revitalization and growth of socialist-oriented and pro-Marxist currents and groupings. In the past we tended to assume that all that was worth while in other socialist currents and groupings would inevitably flow into our own organization. This assumption was always incorrect and should be replaced by serious and painstaking efforts to assist in the eventual development of the broadest possible unity of all socialist-minded elements.

The perspective of an eventual united socialist movement or party must be viewed as the climax of a series of struggles and developments. It is not a quick and easy solution to the common problems of all socialist groupings, or to the specific problems of our own Party. Such an approach would both weaken our Party and distort this perspective. Least of all could this objective be advanced by any tendency to weaken or dissolve the Communist Party. On the contrary, it is essential that the Communist Party strengthen in every way its organization, mass work and influence.

The prospect we hold forth for our Party likewise requires a reinvigoration of the Marxist press. A prerequisite for an effective hearing for Marxist ideas and for making their influence felt in respect to the course of our country's development is that we spare no effort in helping to finance and solve the distribution problems of *The Worker* and the *Daily Worker*. Stabilizing the financial base of the Marxist press and building its circulation will establish the practical foundation for a steady improvement in its political and journalistic quality.

The attainment of unity among socialist-minded forces lies along the path of common struggle on the broadest issues facing the American people, in the course of which ideological and tactical questions will become clarified and common bonds be forged.

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

309

It lies along the path of extending the process of frank exchange and discussion that has been taking place during the past year and ensuring that our Party at all levels increasingly participates in this process.

It would be wrong to identify the extent of socialist traditions and thinking with the low level of socialist organization today. Among the trade unions, in the building of which Socialists and Communists played a major role, among the Negro people, the working farmers, the professionals and the youth who are pondering the significance of the growth of the socialist world system, as well as among the many thousands who at one time were members of our Party or who participated in mass struggles under our leadership, are to be found many who would welcome the perspective of a united party of socialism. The National Committee should be charged with fostering this perspective.

The historic objective of achieving unity of all honest socialist-minded forces to develop the American people's anti-monopoly coalition, as well as for the ultimate achievement of socialism, throws an added light on our re-appraisal of our Party's past and present functioning, its mass activity and its vast role in the period ahead.

## VI. OUR PARTY

The Communist Party made a vital contribution to the welfare of our country since the end of World War II by its unflinching fight for peace, against the danger of fascism, for the civil rights of the Negro people, and for the economic needs of the working people. It continues to do so.

Communists fought consistently through the years of the cold war to help bring about the present improved political situation. In so doing, they served the best national interests of our country with patriotic selflessness.

At its Emergency Convention in 1945, the Communist Party warned the American people about the dangers inherent in the developing plans of Wall Street to dominate the world. As this aggressive drive for world domination unfolded, the Communist

310 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

Party alerted the American people to the emergence of a serious danger of a new world war. It exposed and combatted every policy and action which jeopardized or broke the peace; the notorious "get tough with Russia" policy; the war-inciting Fulton, Missouri, speech of Winston Churchill; the Truman doctrine of "containment," atom-bomb diplomacy and military intervention in China and Greece; the Marshall Plan; the "positions of strength" policy embodied in the Atlantic Pact, NATO, SEATO and other military alliances, as well as the building of military bases all over the world. The Communist Party fought consistently under difficult conditions for a negotiated peace to end the Korean War. It vigorously combatted the Big Lie of an alleged threat of Soviet aggression. It called for the negotiation of differences between the Big Powers, the end of the cold war and its replacement by a policy of peaceful coexistence between our country and the Soviet Union.

### **Our Party's Achievements**

During this period the Communist Party took the lead in combatting a host of repressive measures and policies designed to silence those fighting for peace and to intimidate the American people into acceptance of unpopular military adventures. It exposed and fought against the Schwellenbach proposal for outlawing the Communist Party, the Mundt-Nixon Bill, the McCarran Act, the Taft-Hartley Act, the Attorney General's "subversive list," the thought-control "loyalty" order and civil service witch-hunts, the persecution by Congressional committees, the Smith Act prosecutions, the McCarthyite inquisition and the "atom-spy" hoax which resulted in the frame-up and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, as well as the imprisonment of Morton Sobell. The Party exposed and fought against repressive measures and policies adopted in many states.

Throughout this period the Communist Party actively supported labor's struggles for improved economic and working conditions, particularly during the big strikes of the miners, the railway, packing-house, steel, auto, electrical and farm equipment workers. Communists championed labor's united action in defense of its hard won gains.



MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

311

They contributed to labor's growing appreciation of its unique and decisive role in the life of the nation. They helped labor gain a better understanding of its relation to the struggle for Negro rights. They urged closer working relationships between labor and the farm population. They fought for democratic, militant trade unionism and against expulsions, raiding, secessions and the fragmentation of the labor movement. They popularized independent political action as the key to the future not only of the labor movement but of the entire nation.

The Communist Party energetically championed the struggles of the Negro people for full economic, social and political equality. It made notable contributions in defending Willie McGee, the Martinsville Seven, the Trenton Six, Mrs. Rosa Lee Ingram and Wesley Wells; in combatting segregated housing in Stuyvesant Town, Levittown, and Parkchester in New York, in Park Manor, Peoria Street and Trumbull Park in Illinois, and in many other communities throughout the nation; in popularizing the battle for Negro representation in all elective and appointive government bodies; in promoting the struggle for inclusion of model FEPC clauses in union contracts; in fighting for election and appointment of Negro leaders to top positions in the lily-white leadership of many unions. These and similar activities of the Communist Party contributed substantially to the emergence of the current broad movement for civil rights.

The struggles waged by the Communist Party in the past decade constitute a notable chapter in the history of the American working class. As the tide continues to turn against McCarthyism and the cold war, sweeping away the frenzied insanity of a decade of red-baiting, lies and distortions, the justice and courage of the Communist Party's struggle will be increasingly vindicated in the eyes of all Americans who have the real welfare of our country at heart. Every member and friend of the Communist Party has reason to be proud of the contributions made to the great task of helping save America from the catastrophe of war and fascism.

The Communist Party and its supporters have reason to be proud of the staunchness with which they met the wave of persecution against them. Nonetheless, this persecution was not without effect. It took the form of an expanding pattern of repression including: Taft-

Hartley Act affidavits and perjury prosecutions; Smith Act arrests, trials, convictions and jail sentences; Congressional committee inquisitions and contempt citations; the screening of whole industries and the entire civil service; firings from jobs, hounding from professions, establishment of industry-wide blacklists; McCarran Act persecutions; widespread deportations of foreign-born; deprivation of legal rights to halls, radio time, advertising space, etc. All this put the Communist Party in a position of de facto illegality.

Furthermore, the attacks on the Party occurred at a time when the overall economic situation, with the exception of the chronic post-war agricultural crisis, was characterized by high levels of employment and increased total earnings by workers' families. This situation gave rise to two trends in the ranks of the working class. On the one hand, the absence of an army of unemployed who might be used as a club against them encouraged the workers to fight militantly through this period for wage increases and important fringe benefits. This is a positive feature of the postwar decade. On the other hand, the growth of class consciousness was inhibited by the spreading of Keynesian theories in the labor movement to the effect that capitalism could permanently solve the problem of "boom or bust" through a "managed economy" with built-in stabilizers. This helped erode the class consciousness of many labor leaders who in past years considered themselves adherents of socialism, but who today have abandoned their socialist convictions. In this situation, the capacity of the labor movement to understand the significance of the attack on the Communists was also weakened and its defense of the rights of Communists was relatively limited.

The attack unleashed against the Communist Party was designed to destroy it. In this, it did not succeed. It did succeed in weakening and isolating the Party. It is necessary for all members of the Communist Party to face up soberly to the fact that in this period the Party suffered heavy organizational losses, declined in political influence in many areas of work, became dangerously isolated from important sectors of the labor and people's movement, is confronted with the grave jeopardizing of the Marxist press, and that in general the Party is faced with a serious crisis of a political, ideological, and organizational nature.

Was it inevitable that the Party should become so severely iso-

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

313

lated and suffer such organizational and political losses as it did? The answer must be NO. Against the background of the objective situation and its consequences, the errors and long-standing weaknesses of our Party had a particularly damaging effect.

**Errors and Weaknesses of the Party**

The most important of these errors include:

A. *In the Fight for Peace.* The Party's estimate that Wall Street's drive for world domination created a serious danger of a new world war was correct. With this analysis our Party made a significant contribution to the mobilization of American and world peace forces. At the same time some serious sectarian mistakes were made in analyzing important phases of the struggle between the forces of peace and war. While we repeatedly asserted that World War III was not inevitable, we tended to weaken this correct estimate by declaring that each new defeat for American imperialism increased its desperation and, hence, increased the danger of war. This was coupled with an analysis that the only major difference in the ranks of monopoly capital was between those who want war now and those who want war later.

This overlooked the fact that Wall Street's ability to achieve its predatory aims was diminishing and that the setbacks to the imperialist drive sharpened all differences within the ranks of monopoly capital as well as between the imperialists of various countries. It overlooked the fact that the overall situation of American imperialism still gave it room to maneuver short of world war rather than reducing it to desperate alternatives.

In effect, such estimates excluded the possibility of the peaceful settlement of differences except through a major change in the relation of class forces in the United States. They made it difficult to convince the Party membership and the masses of the possibility of achieving under existing conditions a protracted period of peaceful coexistence.

Certainly, when Dulles three times took our country "to the brink of war," this represented on each occasion an acute sharpening of the danger of wars which might have had global repercussions. But Dulles' inability to take our country over the brink revealed the strength of the obstacles to war. It was precisely this strength that our Party underestimated.

That is why, despite our statements regarding the profound significance of the armistice in Korea and the negotiated peace in Indo-China, our Party did not draw full conclusions from the favorable changes in international relations which these events signaled. Because of a narrow concept of the division of the world into two camps we did not properly assess the growth of a neutralist bloc in the world, especially the newly liberated colonial countries, as well as like forces in our country. In fact, up to the very eve of the Geneva Summit meeting there were strong tendencies to underestimate the ability of the peace forces, within our country and internationally, to compel the Eisenhower Administration to enter into peaceful negotiations with the socialist world.

B. *In the Fight Against the Fascist Danger.* The Party correctly assessed the connection between American imperialism's aggressive foreign policy and the host of reactionary and pro-fascist measures which began to be promulgated, adopted or enforced in the late 1940's. These measures were designed to intimidate and suppress all opposition to the aggressive policies of Big Business. Contrary to opinions prevalent in some circles that this development was a temporary post-war aberration which would automatically subside in time, the Party emphasized the potential fascist danger if it was not checked by the active struggle of the American people.

However, the errors made by the Party in estimating various phases of the struggle against the war danger also influenced its judgment of the fascist menace, particularly in relation to attempts to outlaw the Party. This took the form of overestimating the scope, level and tempo of the process of fascization under way generally. Our evaluation also tended to equate the attempted outlawing of the Party with fascism.

This led to wrong organizational decisions in 1950, including conscious efforts to reduce the size of the Party membership. While this particular error was quickly recognized by the Districts and the National Committee and corrective steps were taken, it nevertheless resulted in serious damage to the Party organization.

Subsequently, in 1951, the National Committee statement on the Vinson decision upholding the first Smith Act conviction of Communist leaders estimated that we had entered a wholly "new situation"; in other words, that a qualitative change had taken place in the

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

315

process of the fascization of our country. This led to the introduction of a system of leadership which virtually gave up the fight for legality, tended to accept a status of illegality and abandoned many possibilities for the public functioning of the Party.

While it was essential to safeguard the Party and enable it to function under the difficult conditions it faced, and while numerous Communists displayed great steadfastness in this task, nevertheless, as a result of a sectarian approach to this effort, the Party needlessly lost thousands of members. This facilitated the efforts of reaction to isolate us from the masses who, naturally, could not understand the Party's course in the given situation.

Contributing to these left-sectarian errors were:

a) the failure to recognize that the ruling class was not so hard pressed as to be unable to continue its established method of governmental rule even as it sharply curtailed the Bill of Rights by launching unprecedented attacks against the labor and people's movements, and in the first place, against the Communist Party;

b) underestimation of the strength of American democratic traditions among the people, their readiness to defend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the latent power of the trade unions as a bulwark against fascism, the peculiarities of American governmental structure, as well as the struggles between and within the two major parties which act as impediments to the repressive drive of the most reactionary circles.

### Nature of the Errors

In our struggle for a mass policy we base ourselves on the following Marxist-Leninist propositions:

a) that both left-sectarianism and right-opportunism have objective roots in reality—in the system under which we live;

b) that the struggle must be conducted on both fronts, with the main emphasis against that which threatens the Marxist line of our Party at the given moment.

*The most important mistakes made in the period under review were left-sectarian in character. These left-sectarian mistakes in the context of sharp attacks against the Party are the main reason for the unprecedented degree to which it was possible for Big Business and its political representatives to isolate the Party.*

*To end its isolation and expand its mass work, the main task of the Party today is to overcome completely the influence of left-sectarian estimates, policies and tactics in all fields of work.*

*In the process of carrying out the main task the Party must struggle against existent right-opportunist tendencies, combatting them at all times. This is especially necessary in view of the extremely sharp turn which the Party is now making in many of its basic policies. The necessary struggle against right-opportunist errors must be carried on in such a way as not to weaken the main task.*

This effort has been under way in the Party particularly since the end of 1952. Following the results of the 1952 elections, the National Committee began a serious struggle against left-sectarianism as the main danger in our mass work. This found expression: in the resolution on the results of the 1952 elections, which sharply criticized the sectarian direction of the Party's electoral tactics; in leading articles in 1953, which outlined the path for a sharp break with sectarianism in our mass work and for redirecting the Party toward the mainstream of the labor movement; in overcoming hesitation on the projection of our position on peaceful transition and an American path to socialism as initiated by Comrade Foster; in the opening of a concerted political struggle against sectarianism in many phases of our Negro work, including the issuance of "The Common Program for the South," as well as publication of various articles; in the initiation of new approaches to the Smith Act trials; in serious efforts to influence the Left-led unions to re-enter the mainstream of the labor movement; in the Party Program adopted in 1954 which, despite certain errors in estimate gave new and broad perspectives to the Party both in its immediate work and long range outlook; in the gradual abandonment and finally complete liquidation of unnecessary and extreme security measures.

However, this struggle was carried on in a piece-meal manner with considerable inconsistency and vacillation because it met with strong resistance in the Party. This resulted at times in conciliation with or continuance of sectarian policies and practices. Moreover, the political struggle against sectarianism was undermined and in fact contradicted by continuation of the organizational policies which flowed from the National Committee's 1951 decisions on the system of leadership.

Nevertheless, as a result of these beginnings of the battle against

MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

317

sectarianism during 1953, 1954 and 1955 (taken together with favorable changes in the political situation), some advances have already been made in unfreezing relations with important center forces in the trade unions, the Negro people's organizations and the communities, as well as in beginning to overcome the Party's formerly extreme isolation in many fields. Basically we could not correct our past mistakes as long as we had not yet recognized the sources of left-sectarianism.

While these errors were the property of the Party as a whole, a major burden of responsibility must fall upon the leadership of our Party, who were in the main responsible for the formulation of those sectarian policies and estimates without the widest consultation of the membership. On most occasions, the general membership did not have an opportunity to express their opinion on these questions, so that these policies reflected not the collective estimate of the entire Party, but rather the thinking of the leadership itself. Had the leadership fully understood the role the membership could have played, many of these mistakes could have been avoided or corrected more quickly.

The April 1956 meeting of the National Committee inaugurated a new phase in the struggle against sectarianism. The report of Comrade Dennis advanced the struggle against left-sectarianism by examining the basic estimates in which the sectarian tactical line of the Party has been rooted. The report established that the main task of the Party in the present period was to eliminate every vestige of left-sectarianism in policies and activities.

The roots of these errors are not to be found in the events of the past ten years alone.

The Marxist movement in our country has suffered historically from dogmatic application of Marxist theory to the American scene. The Communist Party inherited these weaknesses. Insufficient development of the independent theoretical work of our Party over the past decades has contributed towards our doctrinaire acceptance and mechanical application of many theoretical propositions.

Our Party has also suffered from an oversimplified approach to and an uncritical acceptance of many views of Marxists and Marxist parties in other countries.

Bureaucratic methods of leadership, failure to develop inner-party democracy and a frequent intolerant attitude to the people we worked with have been in large measure responsible for our inability to correct

## 318 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

mistakes in time as well as for much of our sectarianism. All these factors are interrelated; each helped to reinforce the other.

To advance the struggle in the United States for peace, democracy, civil rights and socialism, the Communist Party must further develop its independent theoretical work. It must free itself from deeply ingrained habits of dogmatism and doctrinairism which breed sectarianism, and which in turn lend encouragement to right-opportunism.

In order to succeed in this, the Party must study thoroughly the realities of American life today, the history and traditions of our working class and people, the special features of capitalist economy and bourgeois democracy in our country, the distinctive features of the American road to socialism.

*In carrying out this central ideological task, we should bear in mind our Party's past errors in the direction of revisionism and guard against any such tendencies in the present period. This must be done in such a way as to reinforce the struggle to overcome the main obstacle which is our deeply rooted dogmatism and doctrinairism, a struggle which is still only in its initial stages.*

Marxism-Leninism is a scientific analysis of the universal and objective laws of social development. It is the generalization of the experience of the working class of each country and of all lands, and like all science, is an international product. The principles of scientific socialism were first put forward by Marx and Engels. They were further developed in the imperialist era by Lenin. They were later enriched by contemporary Marxists in many countries. The Communist Party bases its theory generally on the cultural heritage of mankind, and particularly on the principles of scientific socialism developed by Marx, Engels and Lenin. These principles the Communist Party of the United States interprets, and applies, and strives to develop further, in accordance with the requirements of the American class struggle and democratic traditions. We must learn much better how to extract from the rich body of this theory that which is universally valid, combining it with the specific experiences of the American working class in the struggle for socialism in the United States. In doing this, the Party must distinguish better between those additions to Marxist theory which are valid for all countries and those which reflect exclusively certain unique features of one or another country.

Likewise, the Communist Party will have to be bolder in re-ex-



## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

319

examining certain Marxist-Leninist theories which, while valid in a past period, may have become outdated and rendered obsolete by new historical developments. For entirely new and unprecedented problems are emerging today which were never treated by Marx, Engels or Lenin. They arise from the new world situation and its impact on all countries.

Already in response to these new developments, important new elements have been introduced into the body of Marxist theory by Marxists of many countries and other theoretical questions are still under discussion. For example, we as well as other Marxist parties have already discarded as obsolete the thesis that war is inevitable under imperialism. We have also rejected as incorrect the concept of inevitable violent proletarian revolution, recognizing the possibility in our country of a peaceful, constitutional transition to socialism. We are in full agreement to study further the question of our theoretical and tactical approach to war, the theory of the state, dictatorship of the proletariat and other questions that time does not afford an opportunity to resolve at this national convention.

We must undertake to make our own independent contribution to the further development and enrichment of the theory of scientific socialism. Creative Marxism is impossible without ceaseless re-examination and reappraisal of theory in the light of ever-changing reality.

This Convention feels that it is incorrect to continue to function without a comprehensive and basic written program. The program adopted in 1954 is inadequate for that purpose. Such a program is necessary in order to define clearly and unequivocally the viewpoint of American Communists on all fundamental problems of the struggle for socialism in the United States. The Convention instructs the incoming National Committee to elect a program committee to begin drafting such a document, which will be submitted to the membership for general discussion.

### **The Communist Party—Independent Party of American Workers**

The Communist Party is an independent party of American workers dedicated to socialism. Its primary concern is for the present and future welfare of the American people. Its only allegiance is to the

working class and people of our country. Its consistent objective is to promote the national welfare and advance our country's true national interests.

The Communist Party formulates its policies independently. It is not subject to any external allegiance or discipline either of an organizational or political character.

The Communist Party works for friendship between all peoples so that our country may prosper in a world at peace. In this spirit it advocates friendship and cooperation between our country and the socialist countries. This has been one of its major contributions to the national welfare.

The Soviet Union, People's China and the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe are socialist countries. The system of capitalist exploitation has been abolished in these countries and, together with it, the cause of poverty, fascism, war, national oppression and race discrimination. From the beginning the Communist Party has greeted and supported the efforts of the working people of these countries to build a new life for themselves on socialist foundations.

Big Business tries to vilify these countries, to slander and defame them, to incite hostility against them. In the interest of the American people the Communist Party is concerned with nailing these lies and exposing these slanders.

The attitude of the Communist Party to these countries reflects its devotion to the great principle of working-class internationalism which has deep roots in our country's history. This tradition of international solidarity is a proud one. The Communist Party continues it and considers it a badge of honor.

At the same time the Communist Party recognizes that over the years it held certain wrong and oversimplified concepts of what its relations should be to other Marxist parties. The Party tended to accept uncritically many views of Marxists of other countries. Not all these views were correct; some did not correspond to American conditions.

The Party also viewed uncritically developments in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. It mistakenly thought that any public criticism of the views or policies of the Marxist parties of these countries would weaken the bonds of international working-class solidarity or bring comfort to the enemies of peace and socialism.

The incorrectness of this view was highlighted by the revelations

MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

321

in Khrushchev's special report to the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Because it held this view, the Communist Party of our country was entirely unprepared for and deeply shocked by the admissions of crimes, violations of socialist justice, mistreatment of certain national minorities, and the basis for the rupture of relations with Yugoslavia—all at variance with the truly liberating character of socialism. The courage shown in making these disclosures and the profound process of self-correction, begun some years ago and sharply accelerated since the 20th Congress, are irrefutable evidence of the historic role and vitality of the socialist system.

Socialism is strengthened, not weakened, by the fraternal and constructive criticism of Marxists of many lands.

New problems of relations have arisen as a result of the emergence of socialism as a world system comprising a number of national states in place of one encircled socialist country. Serious mistakes and shortcomings in the relations between the USSR and other socialist states—as in the examples of Poland and Hungary—have been revealed. Efforts are being made to correct these mistakes and certain important corrections have been made on the basis of a further development of the Marxist-Leninist principles of proletarian internationalism, national independence and equality. Correction of errors in relationships between socialist states is facilitated by the fact that the fundamental basis of such relations is common ideology, common aims, mutual assistance and cooperation.

International working-class solidarity includes the right and responsibility to friendly criticism of brother parties or the actions of socialist governments. At the same time it requires that such criticism shall be within the framework of recognition that the fundamental conflict of all peoples is with the forces of imperialism.

Our attitude was used to refurbish the slanderous calumny which has been used historically against all radical movements in our country—the lie that the Communist Party is “the agent of a foreign power.”

This despicable charge is a lie cut from the whole cloth. We are American Communists, patriots. Our allegiance is to our own country, the United States. In representing and advancing the fundamental welfare of the working class we aim always to serve our country's true national interests.

The Communist Party must continue to correct the oversimplified relations which have existed between itself and other Marxist parties. These relations must be based on the principles of scientific socialism, on proletarian internationalism; they must be based on each Communist Party serving the best national interests of its people and thereby the common interests of all progressive humanity. This requires the equality and independence of Marxist parties in the mutual discussion and resolution of common problems; the right and duty of the Communists of all countries to engage in comradely criticism of the policies and practices of the Communists of any country whenever they feel this necessary. This will strengthen, not weaken, international solidarity. It will advance the cause of socialism in all countries.

### **Bureaucratic Concepts of Party Organization**

Bureaucratic concepts of Party organization, systems of leadership and relations between the Party and the masses have been a prime factor in contributing to our errors. They hindered the early and timely correction of these errors. Wrong concepts of leadership discouraged full and free participation of the membership in the discussion of policy and tactics. They stood as insurmountable obstacles to the efforts of comrades in mass organizations to challenge sectarian policies and tactics. They contributed to the weakening of inner-party democracy. In many cases they resulted in departure from the very procedures established by our own constitution. They resulted in disciplinary actions which further inhibited expressions of disagreement. They made the life of the Party largely routine, devoted, at least between pre-convention discussion periods, to the organization of a multitude of campaigns characterized by inadequate examination and testing of our policies and tactics in actual life by our members in the shops and mass organizations.

These bureaucratic methods of work, system of leadership and organization have been accentuated in part by the mechanical application of certain principles of organization adopted by other Communist parties which functioned under different historical conditions.

The history of factional struggle which almost destroyed our Party in its early years gave rise to a correct desire to defend Party unity against the danger of factional splits. But this was distorted by efforts to achieve formal unity instead of uniting the Party on the

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

323

basis of principle, a full democratic inner life and free, open discussion of differences.

This convention must completely abolish these bureaucratic methods of work, organization and leadership. It must clearly define the character of our Party and its proper method of organization and functioning.

The Communist Party is an American working-class political party. It is a Party of white and Negro unity. It is devoted to the struggle for constant advancement of the welfare of the working class, the Negro people, the farming population, small businessmen and professional people. Its ultimate aim is the socialist reorganization of society in a peaceful, constitutional manner by the majority choice of the American people.

### **On Vanguard Role**

Our effort to advance these objectives requires that we retain the fundamental concept of our organization as a vanguard organization, one which is based on the scientific theory of socialism and which strives at all times to strengthen its ties with the working class and people, to win their confidence and support by participation in their everyday struggles.

The spontaneous struggles of the working class against capitalist exploitation can, at best, lead only to trade union consciousness. Socialist consciousness must be brought into the working-class movement by a party which is based on an advanced theory, scientific socialism. Only such a party can help make the working class conscious of itself as a class, help it grasp the relationship of class forces, the meaning of specific struggles, the interconnection of these struggles with the necessary and inevitable victory of socialism.

The Party of Communists always places uppermost the interests of the entire working class and all the oppressed people. It dedicates itself to helping the working class and its allies gain, step by step, ever greater victories leading toward their historical goal of ending class exploitation. This is the essence of the concept "vanguard role" which we seek to fulfill.

The concrete expression of this role will of necessity be different today in the presence of a powerful organized labor movement and Negro people's movement than it was in the '30's when these move-

ments were much smaller in size and narrower in content.

A Marxist Party which seeks to gain the confidence of its class cannot do so by arrogantly assuming that it is already *the leader* of the workers. The possession of advanced theory and the ability to project advanced ideas in the current struggles can and should lead to the ever greater identification of such a Marxist party with the class, and the enhancement of its leadership role. But this is not an automatic process.

In the past we have mechanically assumed the position of "the leader of the working class" without regard to our real position of strength and influence. This attitude hindered the very aim of providing Marxist guidance to the working class. As a result, the term "vanguard role" assumed connotations of unrealism and arrogance, with which we seek to break. Listening and learning from the workers, particularly in their everyday struggles at the level at which they are being waged, we strive to earn the esteem of the working class as a foundation for effective leadership.

### **On Democratic Centralism and Monolithic Unity**

Democracy is vital to a Communist Party. It is the method by which the rich experience of the members of the Party and the masses of people become available to the Party as a whole. It is this experience and democratic participation together with the power of Marxist analysis which enables the Party to keep Marxism from being a dogma, and instead makes it a living, growing, developing science with which we can serve our class and nation ever more effectively.

Whatever views may exist in our Party on the theory of democratic centralism, *our* concept and application in the past has led to highly centralized forms of organization and leadership with the democratic features of Party life subordinated. Experience has shown that our concept of democratic centralism as we practiced it in the past has fed a system of bureaucracy. We have tended to take over mechanically forms of organization and practices from abroad, rather than assimilate critically the experiences of brother parties, utilizing what is valid and applicable to our situations and problems. All this has helped bureaucracy to flourish at the expense of inner-party democracy.

It is these concepts and practices which we seek to modify in

## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

325

order to establish a foundation for a vast expansion of inner-party democracy. We therefore propose that our Constitution shall seek to guarantee that the will of the majority of our membership determines all policy decisions and the election of committees. At the same time provisions should be made for the right to dissent after decisions, while guaranteeing our ability to act in a united way, guarding against factionalism, federationism and parallel centers of leadership.

We must establish the broadest possibilities for democratic expression within our Party and procedures for regular review of policies and the right to dissent even after decisions have been reached. Our system of organization, leadership and concept of discipline must be revised. Being a party of action, and not a debating society, we must maintain a cohesiveness and unity so that we can be an effective force once a policy is decided. Thus the problem is not to abandon all forms of centralization but to find the correct limits.

We want a maximum of internal democracy combined with the necessary unity in action. The Draft Constitution develops proposals that will bring our organization into harmony with the traditions and experiences of American working-class organizations and potentially acceptable to large numbers of American workers and socialist-minded militants as the kind of organization they would want to be identified with.

As to monolithic unity: Originally, this term meant simply a common ideology or outlook as opposed to a mixture of ideologies. In practice, it came to mean a rigid conformity of views on all matters of theory, policy and tactics. The concept of a common ideology must be retained as essential to a Marxist party. But the term should be dropped because of the harmful practices and connotations that have grown around it.

The Communist Party is a democratic organization based on majority rule. It is a cohesive organization for the purpose of acting unitedly to carry out the policies and program decided by its members. The inner life of the Party shall be regulated by the provisions and rules of its constitution which will emerge from this Convention, following prior discussion by the whole membership. The unfolding of a correct mass policy by the Party, as well as its ability to attract and hold masses of socialist-minded Americans, requires extensive changes in its structure and methods of work. Among these are the following:

Guarantees of real inner-party democracy through provision of channels for freedom of discussion, dissent and criticism within the framework of carrying out the majority will.

The National Committee should issue a special publication on a regular monthly basis devoted exclusively to articles or letters discussing, debating or differing with Party policies, whether current or long-range. Such a publication is necessary to encourage the greatest possible participation by the membership in the formulation, correction or abandonment of policies or tactics.

The decisions of all Party bodies shall continue to be made by majority rule. Minorities or individuals opposed to such decisions shall be required to abide by them. But the right of such individuals or minorities to express their views shall be guaranteed in all cases. However, this does not mean that factions—groupings with their own platform, discipline, organization and publications set up in opposition to the regular program, discipline, organization and publications of the Party—can be tolerated. The whole history of the Communist Party shows that factionalism actually destroys inner-party democracy and shatters Party unity.

Between pre-convention discussion periods the National Committee must take special steps to involve the membership in making basic changes in policy. Such methods may involve setting aside limited periods for Party-wide discussion on draft policy resolutions; or convening special delegated conferences with power to act on specific questions presented beforehand to the membership; or the organization of referendum votes on questions.

Establishment of closest ties between membership and leadership and creation of political and organizational guarantees against bureaucratic separation of leadership from membership by the following:

a) Proceedings of the National Committee shall be publicized, including digests of speeches or reports as well as votes of National Committee members on important questions. Where possible, State Committees shall do likewise.

b) Minutes of National Board meetings shall be circulated among all members of the National Committee. Periodic summaries should be sent to State Committees.

c) The National Committee should be considerably enlarged.

d) The National Committee shall meet a minimum of three times



## MAIN POLITICAL RESOLUTION

327

per year, with agendas and draft documents to be discussed sent in advance to all members.

The important and deep-going changes on questions of program, policy and organization will expand the opportunities of our members to work with ever larger sections of progressive Americans and their organizations. It will provide the basis for building our Party into an effective Marxist organization capable of coping with the challenging problems before the American working class and people. There are no valid grounds for any destructive attitude towards the Party's past contributions and the vital role the Party has to play in the future. Neither is there any justification for proposals to liquidate our Party so as to "clear the way" for a broader party of socialism at some future time.

This convention goes on record to affirm the continuation of the Communist Party of the USA. Our chief task is to strengthen, rebuild and consolidate the Communist Party and overcome its isolation.

This convention opposes the transformation of the Party into a political or educational association.

Although we oppose endless debate on this question, this should not close the door to all constructive exploration and discussion of the subject as may be organized by the incoming National Committee.

We recognize that some ideas that have been brought forward in this discussion are revisionist in character. However, it would be wrong to label all proposals for change in name and form as revisionist per se.

### **The People's Struggles Today**

It should be our concern to help the labor and people's movements bring the decisive issues to the forefront and win significant gains.

High among these issues is the people's standard of living: job security, farm income, the high cost of living, the crisis in schools, housing and health, the chronic poverty of one-fifth of the nation, segregation and discrimination.

The new outburst of struggles in the South again highlights the central importance of the civil rights struggle of the Negro people and their allies. Therefore we demand full equality in jobs, housing, educa-

328 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

tion and political representation, and the abolition of all forms of segregation.

Vital questions affecting the civil liberties of all Americans are at issue before the Supreme Court, Congress and the Administration: the Taft-Hartley Act, the "loyalty" program, the Smith Act, the McCarran Act, the McCarran-Walter Act and the demand for amnesty for Smith Act prisoners. These require the rallying of the American people to regain their lost liberties and defend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Above all, the people's profound desire for peace and an end to the cold war calls for concrete steps toward disarmament and a policy of peaceful coexistence: for an end to H-bomb tests, for drastic cuts in the arms budget and the like.

In the struggles around these issues in the shops and communities our concern at all times must be to help strengthen and unite the organizations of labor and the people. It must be to help build under labor's leadership an ever more effective people's coalition directed against the great monopolies and striving to elect a people's anti-monopoly government.

Our Party stretches out its hand to all workers and the whole American people in the fellowship of common struggle for the goal of peace, democracy and social progress.

## Resolution on Social Democracy

Adopted by the 16th National Convention, C.P.U.S.A.

February 9-12, 1957

Social Democracy continues to be a major influence in the labor and people's movements of almost all capitalist countries. It plays a significant role in a number of colonial and semi-colonial countries. In our country, while the actual Social Democratic organizations and their influence are relatively small, reformism in its specific American form is the decisive influence in the labor and people's movement.

It is clear, therefore, that a correct attitude towards Social Democracy and other reformist organizations and movements is most essential to our Party. Without it, it is impossible to overcome our sectarianism, to break out of our isolation and to effectively advance the struggle either for our immediate objectives or our socialist aims. In the past we suffered both from a woeful underestimation of the role and influence of Social Democracy and other reformist trends, as well as from a narrow sectarian policy towards them.

The very terms Social Democrat and Social Democracy were used by us almost exclusively in a derogatory fashion. While we did take a very positive position towards reforms under capitalism, our use of the term reformist only in a derogatory manner sometimes tended to give the impression that we feared or opposed many reforms because they might strengthen capitalism. Quite often, by centering our main criticism against the Social Democratic and other reformist leaders of the labor, Negro and other people's organizations, we weakened the necessary unity against the common enemy.

By the thesis that it is essential to smash all Social Democratic organizations as a condition to win the masses to socialism, we weakened both the unity in the immediate struggle and the winning of the workers to the socialist goal. By adopting a policy of striving towards the liquidation rather than the cooperation of the Social Democratic

330 PROCEEDINGS OF 16TH CONVENTION, C.P.U.S.A.

organizations, we undermined rather than promoted the united front of the Communists and Socialists. Most of these errors were common to the world Communist movement and their harmful effect was most sharply expressed in the characterization of Social Democracy as social fascism at the very moment when fascism was menacing the entire working class and all its organizations and trends. In the middle '30's these errors were corrected in part. This resulted in many positive experiences in the anti-fascist struggles of that period.

A specific error prevailing for many years in our Party was the theory of "skipping over the reformist stage," which grew out of the fact that the Social Democratic organizations, as well as the trade unions, were relatively weak in our country. This led to the theory that the Communists would thus lead the workers in organizing trade unions, a labor party, etc., free of reformist leadership. This attitude was carried over in other fields of work, including the Negro liberation movement. Remnants of this theory are still prevalent. It is one of the specific manifestations of our sectarianism, and a complete break with this "skipping over" theory is essential for a successful struggle against it.

While there is no mass Social Democratic Party in the USA, it would be a mistake to underestimate the influence of the existing Social Democratic groups, trends and organizations, whose influence is far greater than their mere number or current activities in their own name. The trade union movement, now grown to more than 16 million members, is led primarily by labor and social reformists whose policies determine the program of the trade union movement.

To a degree, the cooperation of labor reformists (trade union leaders who stand for capitalism and with no socialist background or traditions), social reformists (those labor leaders who have a socialist background), and bourgeois reformists (liberal wing of the Democratic Party) in such organizations as Americans for Democratic Action is, in the absence of a mass Social Democratic Party in the U.S., and under the conditions prevailing in our country, performing the function of Social Democracy.

We should not push this comparison too far. But it can emphasize for us the fact that we do have the influence of reformism in our country, even though it is not identical with that of most of the other capitalist countries. We also can see from this that correcting the previous error that we have no problem of Social Democracy or reformism

## RESOLUTION ON SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

331

in this country should not result in labelling every reformist a Social Democrat.

It is erroneous to think that the American workers and their allies will create an anti-monopoly coalition and establish an anti-monopoly government without the trade unions and other reformist-led organizations being the very basis for such a movement. This does not mean that all reformist leaders will readily support such a movement and objectives or that many of them will not offer strong resistance to it. It will be a steady struggle in which the masses will push forward because of necessity and the experience they will gain in the course of the developing struggles on immediate issues. It will be a struggle that will inevitably result in differentiation within the leadership of the trade unions and other mass organizations.

In this developing struggle for the anti-monopoly coalition the more advanced forces of the labor and people's movement can and should play a most important and essential role. This is why, among other reasons, there is need for strengthening our own Party. This is one of the tasks that can be performed by the cooperation of the Communists and other socialist-oriented forces in the labor and people's movement. Such cooperation, as well as united action in defense of peace, civil liberties, equal rights and economic security will no doubt facilitate clarification of ideological questions among many and promote the movement for a broader united Marxist Party in our country.

We must be on guard against confusing the need for a labor-people's anti-monopoly coalition with the perspective for a broader united Marxist Party. In some Left circles outside our ranks, such confusion can already be noted. Lack of clarity on this question can lead to a narrow sectarian position towards the anti-monopoly coalition and an opportunist position on a united Marxist Party. It is clear that these movements will develop simultaneously. They will generally support each other, objectively. But they must be seen as distinct movements with distinct objectives. Obviously, all those favoring and striving for anti-monopoly goals to be achieved under capitalism can be won for the first. Only those favoring socialism can be won for the latter.

Our emphasis on a new approach to Social Democracy and reformism generally is not based upon and does not imply the opportunist-

ist idea of the disappearance of all differences between the Communists and Social Democrats, between the Marxists and reformist trends in the world labor movement and here in the USA. The new approach is first a recognition of a new situation, new relations of forces, new tasks, first and foremost being that of preventing a third world war. It flows from the fact that in the present situation, the paramount issues confronting the labor movement are the defense of peace, national freedom and democracy.

Our new approach does recognize past errors as well as narrowing of differences. On a world scale the new theoretical proposition that wars are no longer inevitable under present conditions does not automatically wipe out the danger of war, but on the other hand places new emphasis on the need for and the possibility for cooperation on the part of all workers' organizations in defense of peace. Without question, our renewed emphasis—now also adopted by the world Communist movement—on a peaceful and constitutional road to socialism, removes one of the major differences of the past. Our Party's new approach to civil liberties now, and our pledge to preserve and extend the Bill of Rights under socialism should remove one of the major barriers toward cooperation with those socialists who really strive to achieve democratic socialism.

Our position on the possibility of socialism being achieved through the cooperation of a number of workers' and other democratic people's parties, as well as the continuance of a multi-party system under socialism, so long as the people desire this, is another major step in the direction of cooperation of all Marxist and socialist-oriented forces NOW and towards the ultimate creation of a broader united Marxist party. Our abandonment of an idealistic, uncritical attitude towards the lands of socialism, for one of a more mature and critical support of their socialist achievement and contribution to world peace and the strengthening of the world labor movement, should greatly strengthen our Party's ability to promote true internationalism generally, and win support for a better understanding of the socialist world among the socialist-minded workers.

The ideological differences that divide the Social Democrats from the Communists remain fundamental and numerous. Here we refer not to certain groupings like the Nenni Socialists in Italy, like G. D. H. Cole in Britain, or some like those grouped around the *Monthly*

## RESOLUTION ON SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

333

*Review* here. We refer to the official Social Democratic movement, its main leaders in such countries as Britain, France, West Germany, etc., and those in the U.S.A. who occupy the same place in the political spectrum. And we limit ourselves to ideological differences and do not speak of such obvious differences as those of the policies of the French Socialists (now the government party) in Algeria or Egypt, or similar differences with Social Democrats in our country.

These differences include their rejection in whole or in part of dialectical and historical materialism; their adherence to class collaboration as against the class struggle; their rejection in practice of internationalism, exemplified, among other things, in the negative attitude to the USSR and the other socialist lands; differences exist on such important matters as the national and agrarian questions, colonialism, imperialist war, the role of the working class, the role of the Marxist party of the working class and the allies of the working class.

Among those who still formally adhere to the aim of socialism, it is conceived as the end product of a series of capitalist reforms and not as a radical transformation of society, and hence our difference with them is not merely one of how socialism is to be achieved. And on this question too, our conception of the peaceful and constitutional road to socialism is not identical with the classic "parliamentary road" put forward by the Social Democrats and which has as yet nowhere led to the establishment of socialism.

In our conception the struggles of the people, the role of the workers and their allies is a basic factor at every stage of the struggle to achieve the radical reorganization of society, in creating the conditions for the people's parliamentary victory, for carrying out of the people's will. All this shows that while we have much in common with Social Democracy and this must be emphasized, many fundamental differences remain.

Our new approach however, is not based on these differences. It is dictated by new possibilities and paramount needs, despite these differences. While we should develop the most thorough and friendly discussion on all questions, including ideological differences, trying to find basic agreement where and with whom we can, it is on the basis of the vital issues now confronting the workers and their allies that we must strive to find the basis for unity. In this way life itself

will contribute towards dissolving or resolving many differences which discussion alone will not achieve. And even where differences remain, we must learn to disagree in a new way. We must not take the position that we have all the answers and have nothing to learn. This includes all questions, theoretical, political and organizational.

We should look upon the Social Democratic organizations, including their elected leaders, as workers' organizations. We must deal with these organizations fraternally, and not as enemies. *We strive for their cooperation, not liquidation.* Such cooperation will be beneficial to all who participate and to the working class as a whole.



# CONSTITUTION

Adopted by the 16th National Convention, C.P.U.S.A.

February 9-12, 1957

## PREAMBLE

The Communist Party of the United States is an American working-class political organization which bases itself upon the principles of scientific socialism. It champions the immediate and fundamental interests of the workers, farmers, the Negro people and all others who labor by hand and brain, against capitalist exploitation and oppression.

The Communist Party believes that the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, of poverty, war, racism and ignorance will be finally achieved by the socialist reorganization of society—by the common ownership and operation of the national economy under a government of the people led by the working class. The Communist Party holds that there are various roads to socialism and that the working people of our nation will find their own road to socialism. We advocate a peaceful, democratic road to socialism through the political and economic struggles of the American people within the developing constitutional process.

The Communist Party seeks to advance the understanding of the work-

ing class in its day-to-day struggles for its historic mission, the establishment of socialism. Socialism, through the achievement of a vastly widened democracy, will fulfill the promise of an atomic age and guarantee the realization of the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," turning the epic achievements of American labor, science and culture to the use and enjoyment of all men and women.

The Communist Party upholds the achievements of American democracy and defends the United States Constitution and its Bill of Rights, particularly the 14th and 15th Amendments which guarantee equality to the American Negro, against those who would destroy democracy. It fights uncompromisingly against imperialism and colonial oppression, for curbing and breaking the power of monopoly, against racial, national and religious discrimination, anti-Semitism and all forms of chauvinism. It regards the struggle to wipe out the system of jim-crowism and to win immediate and full citizenship and unconditional equality for the Negro people as basic to the fight for democracy.

The Communist Party holds as a cardinal principle that there is an iden-

tivity of interest which serves as a common bond uniting the workers of all lands. It recognizes that this common bond is strengthened when working-class movements operate in an atmosphere of independence and equality and exercise the right of fraternal and constructive criticism. It holds further that the true national interest of our country and the cause of peace and progress require the solidarity of all freedom-loving peoples, peaceful coexistence of all nations, and the strengthening of the United Nations as a universal instrument of peace.

The Communist Party bases its theory generally on the scientific, humanist and democratic heritage of mankind and particularly on the principles of scientific socialism as developed by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and V. I. Lenin. These universally valid principles the Communist Party of the U.S.A. interprets, applies and strives to develop further in accordance with the requirements of the American class struggle, democratic traditions and customs. In the struggle for democracy, peace and social progress, the Communist Party strives to carry forward the democratic traditions of Jefferson, Paine, Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, and the great working-class and socialist traditions of William Sylvis, Eugene V. Debs and Charles E. Ruthenberg. In the struggle for socialism the Communist Party seeks no narrow partisan monopoly. It fights side by side with all who struggle for socialism and seeks to cooperate with all socialist-minded Americans to achieve socialism.

For the advancement of these principles, the Communist Party of the United States establishes the basic laws of its organization in the following Constitution:

## ARTICLE I

### *Name*

SECTION I. The name of this organization shall be the Communist Party of the United States of America.

## ARTICLE II

### *Purposes*

SECTION I. The purposes of this organization are: through the exercise of democratic and constitutional rights and participation in the electoral process and other forms of political activity, to promote the welfare of the working people of the United States, defend and extend their democratic rights, help unite them against monopoly control of the political and economic life of our nation, and organize to eliminate the scourge of economic crises, unemployment, poverty, racism and war through the establishment of socialism by the free and democratic choice of a majority of the people.

## ARTICLE III

### *Membership*

SECTION I. Any resident of the United States, 18 years of age or over, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex or religious belief, who subscribes to the principles and purposes of the Communist Party, shall be eligible for membership.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.

337

SECTION 2. An applicant for membership shall be endorsed by at least two members of the Communist Party. Such application shall be subject to approval by a majority vote of the club to which the new member is presented.

SECTION 3. A Party member shall accept the Party program as determined by the Constitution and conventions of the Party, belong to a Party club and pay dues.

SECTION 4. Party members three months in arrears in payment of dues, cease to be members in good standing and shall be so informed. Members who are six months in arrears shall be dropped from Party membership after effort has been made, by personal interviews if feasible, to bring such members into good standing.

**ARTICLE IV**

**Structure**

SECTION 1. The Communist Party shall be organized on the basis of clubs. Clubs may be constituted on an electoral sub-division, neighborhood, town, shop or industry basis.

The officers and executive committees of the clubs shall be elected by the membership by secret ballot annually. Nominations shall take place at one meeting, and elections at the following meeting.

All clubs shall have as a minimum the following officers: club chairman, financial secretary and educational director. Additional officers and committees shall be determined by the size and needs of the club.

Any officer or executive committee

member may be recalled for cause by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the club.

Financial reports shall be submitted to the club membership quarterly.

SECTION 2. The State organization shall comprise all clubs in one State and shall have the power and duty to establish all necessary sub-divisions such as county, city, regional or section organizations.

The highest body of the state organization is the state convention which shall meet at least once every two years. Each sub-division or club in the state shall elect delegates to the convention in such number as the state committee may determine, provided that the number of delegates to which each sub-division or club is entitled shall be in proportion to its membership. To be eligible for election as a delegate, a member shall have been in good standing for at least one year preceding the date of the convention.

Members of the State Committee shall be elected, in such manner and number as the state by-laws, state convention or state committee may determine; by clubs, or section conventions of other sub-divisions of the state organization, provided that the number to be elected by each club, section, or sub-division convention shall be in approximate proportion to the membership it represents.

The members so elected shall be subject to approval by the State Convention. After such approval, the convention shall elect committee members-at-large in such number as the convention may determine but not in

excess of one-third of the total membership of the state committee.

All elections to the state committee shall be by majority vote and secret ballot.

The state convention shall elect by secret ballot and majority vote such officers as it may determine. Officers so elected shall be members of the state committee by virtue of their offices, shall be responsible to the state committee, and shall be subject to recall for cause by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the state committee.

A vacancy among the officers or members-at-large of the state committee may be filled, until the next convention, by secret ballot and majority vote of the members of the state committee. A vacancy among members of the state committee elected by lower organizations may be filled, until the next convention, by majority vote and secret ballot of the club or leading committee of the sub-division with respect to which the vacancy occurred.

To be eligible for election as a state officer or member of the state committee, a member shall have been in good standing for at least two years preceding the date of the election.

Special state conventions may be called by majority vote of the state committee or upon the written request of clubs representing one-third of the membership of the state.

The state committee shall name a committee to administer the finances of the organization and such other officers and committees as it deems necessary, all of which shall be re-

sponsible to the state committee. The State Committee shall make a financial report to all regular state conventions.

State committees shall meet at least four times a year. Policy questions shall be reviewed and new policies may be submitted for adoption on the initiative of one-third of the members of the state committee or by 10% of the clubs. In the event that a club desires the adoption of a policy change it shall submit the proposed change in writing to the next higher body, which shall distribute copies of the proposal to all clubs in its jurisdiction for their action.

SECTION 3. District organizations may be established by the National Committee. District organizations may cover part of one state, or two or more states. Where a district organization covers two or more states, the State Committees shall be under the jurisdiction of the District Committee. The rules for convening District conventions and the election of district officers and committees shall be the same as those provided for the State organization.

SECTION 4. In matters of a local, state or district nature, clubs and section, county, state and district committees have the right to make decisions within the limits of the general policies of the Party as determined by this Constitution, national conventions and the national committee.

SECTION 5. All officers of leading committees are subordinate to these committees. Policy decisions shall be made only by the respective committees.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A. 339

Committees and officers must report regularly on their activities to the body which elected them, or the body to which they are responsible.

SECTION 6. Decisions of the District and State Committees shall regularly be made available to the membership in a manner to be determined by each State and District Committee.

### ARTICLE V

#### *National Organization*

SECTION 1. The highest authority of the Party is the National Convention which is authorized to make political and organizational decisions binding upon the entire Party and its membership. Regular National Conventions shall be held every two years within the first six months of the year.

SECTION 2. The National Convention shall be composed of delegates elected by each state or district convention by secret ballot and majority vote in such number, in approximate proportion to the membership it represents, as the National Committee may determine. To be eligible for election as a delegate, the members shall have been in good standing for at least two years prior to the date of the convention.

SECTION 3. Special National Conventions may be called either by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the National Committee or by majority vote of two-thirds of all State committees not within a District organization and District Committees. It is incumbent upon the National Office to circulate any official request from any State or District Com-

mittee for a Special National Convention to all other State or District Committees for their action. The time and place of such special conventions shall be fixed by the National Committee. The basis for representation shall be determined in the same way as that of regular conventions.

SECTION 4. Prior to regular National Conventions, at least 90 days shall be provided for discussion in all Party clubs and leading committees on the main resolutions and problems coming before the Convention. During this discussion all Party organizations have the right to adopt resolutions and propose amendments to the draft resolutions and the Constitution for consideration by the Convention.

SECTION 5. The National Committee shall be elected in the following manner: Each State and District organization shall hold its convention in advance of the National Convention and shall elect members of the National Committee in a number determined in accordance with a scale of representation determined by the previous National Convention. The names of all members of the National Committee so elected shall be submitted for approval to the National Convention which follows their election. In addition to the members of the National Committee so elected, the National Convention shall elect members of the National Committee-at-large in a number determined by it, but not to exceed one third of the total membership of the National Committee. All elections to the National Committee shall be by secret ballot and majority vote.

The scale of representation shall be determined by the previous national convention.

SECTION 6. Members of the National Committee elected by a District or State organization shall be subject to recall for cause by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the District or State committee or by two-thirds vote of the District or State convention. Vacancies shall be filled by the same body by majority vote. Members-at-large may be recalled for cause by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the National Committee. The National Committee has the right to recommend the recall for cause of National Committee members elected by District or State Committees.

SECTION 7. The National Convention shall elect by secret ballot and majority vote such officers as it decides upon, all of whom shall be members of the National Committee by virtue of their offices. The National Committee shall name an executive committee and any other officers and committees it deems necessary. The officers and committees named by the convention and the National Committee shall be responsible to the National Committee, and may be removed for cause by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the National Committee. Vacancies may be filled by majority vote of the National Committee.

SECTION 8. To be eligible for election as a national officer or member of the National Committee, the member shall have been in good standing for

at least five years preceding the election.

SECTION 9. Between National Conventions, the National Committee is responsible for the enforcement of the Constitution and the execution of the general policies adopted by the National Convention.

Between National Conventions, the National Committee is the highest authority of the Party, representing the Party as a whole, and as such has the authority to make decisions and take actions necessary and incidental to the good and welfare of the entire Party, and to act upon all problems and developments occurring between Conventions. In connection with its duties, and in the exercise of its responsibilities, the National Committee shall guide and direct all the political, organizational and educational work of the Party; organize and supervise its various departments and committees; elect or remove editors of its publications who shall work under its leadership and guidance; organize and direct all undertakings of importance to the entire Party; and administer the national treasury. The National Committee shall submit a certified audited financial report to each National Convention.

Except in the event of an emergency found to exist by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the National Committee, the National Committee shall not make any major policy change until it has submitted the proposed change in draft form to either the District or State Committees or the membership as a whole for

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.

debate for specified periods and for recommendations thereon. Conflicting views within the National Committee on all major policy questions and arguments advanced for and against the proposed policy shall be made known to the membership.

When in the judgment of the National Committee, the best interests of the organization require it, major policy changes shall be submitted to a referendum vote of the membership or to special enlarged, delegated conferences on a National or Regional basis.

SECTION 10. The National Committee shall meet at least four times a year and as often as necessary at the call of the officers or at the request of one-third of its members.

SECTION 11. Summaries and reports of National Committee meetings shall be made available to District and State Committees and shall appear in digest form in some Party publication available to the Party membership.

All Departments and leading committees shall submit reports regularly in writing to the National Committee. Such reports may be published in a Party publication when the National Committee so determines.

SECTION 12. Policy questions shall be reviewed, or new policies submitted for adoption, upon the initiative of one-third of the members of the National Committee.

The duly constituted officers of the National Committee shall make known to the members of the National Committee any request of any individual member of the National

Committee for either a review of or the introduction of new major policy questions.

SECTION 13. The National Committee shall issue a special publication on a regular basis to facilitate reporting by the National Committee to the Party membership and the discussion of Party policies by the membership.

ARTICLE VI

*Rights and Duties of Members*

SECTION 1. Every member of the Party who is in good standing has the right to participate in the making of its policies and in the election of its leading committees, officers and delegates.

Members have the right and duty, within the Party organization, to discuss any and all Party policies and tactics, to criticize the work and composition of all leading committees, to participate fully in the discussion in the Party press or any other authorized Party publications. They also have the right, in accordance with Section 2 of this Article, to dissent from decisions which have been made.

Members shall strive to be active in carrying out the program of the Party, to circulate its press and literature, to increase their knowledge of scientific socialism and to attend club meetings regularly.

SECTION 2. All decisions of any club, committee or convention are made by a majority vote after thorough discussion, unless otherwise specified in this

Constitution, and all members are to abide by such decisions.

Every officer and member shall have the right to express a dissenting opinion on any matter of Party policy with respect to which a decision has been made by majority vote of the appropriate Party committee or convention, provided that such dissenting officer or member does not engage in factional or other activity which hinders or impedes the execution of such policy. The guarantee of the right of dissent provided for by this Section shall be implemented by providing for the expression and discussion of dissenting views in Party publications, including the publication provided for in Section 13 of Article V, and in authorized Party meetings arranged for that purpose.

SECTION 3. Party members disagreeing with any decision of a club, section, county, state or district committee have the right to appeal such decision, successively, to the next higher body, including the National Convention. Decisions of the National Convention are final. While the appeal is pending, members shall not act contrary to the decision already rendered. All appeals should be heard by the respective body within 90 days.

SECTION 4. At regular intervals in the period between conventions, the various Party organizations from Section to National Committees should organize delegated conferences to re-evaluate policy or develop a position on new issues which arise.

SECTION 5. Decisions of higher bodies on major questions shall be reported

to lower bodies with the positions of individual members indicated. The lower bodies on finding the decision of higher bodies incorrect or inadequate shall have the right to request their review and amendment.

SECTION 6. In matters of state or local nature, the Party organizations have the right to exercise full initiative and to make decisions within the limits of the general policies and decisions of the Party.

SECTION 7. It shall be the obligation of all Party members to struggle against all forms of national oppression, national chauvinism, discrimination and segregation, against all ideological influences and practices of "racial" theories, such as white chauvinism and anti-Semitism. It shall be the duty of all Party members to fight for the full social, political and economic equality of the Negro people and promote the unity of the Negro and white people as essential for the advancement of their common interests.

SECTION 8. All Party members who are eligible shall be required to belong to their respective trade unions.

SECTION 9. All Party members in organizations (trade unions, farm and fraternal organizations, etc.) shall cooperate to promote and strengthen the given organization.

SECTION 10. All members eligible shall register and vote in elections for public office.

SECTION 11. The Party shall give full aid in the acquisition of U.S. citizenship to those of its members who, because of unjust and undemocratic laws



and practices, are deprived of this right.

SECTION 12. The Communist Party recognizes the right of any member to resign without prejudice.

## ARTICLE VII

### *Disciplinary Procedure and Appeals*

SECTION 1. Subject to the provisions of this Article, any member or officer of the Party may be reprimanded, put on probation, suspended for a specified period, removed from office or expelled from the Party for actions detrimental to the interests of the Party and the working class, for making false statements in an application for membership, for financial irregularities, or for advocacy or practice of racial, national or religious discrimination.

SECTION 2. Subject to the provisions of this Article, any member shall be expelled from the Party who is a strike-breaker, a provocateur, engaged in espionage, an informer, or who advocates force and violence or terrorism, or who adheres to or participates in the activities of any group or party which conspires or acts to subvert, undermine, weaken or overthrow any institutions of American democracy through which the majority of the American people can maintain their right to determine their destinies.

SECTION 3. Charges against individual members or committees may be made by any member to the club of which

the accused is a member or to the appropriate higher committee having jurisdiction. Clubs shall act upon charges directed against anyone holding membership in that club. All such charges shall be handled expeditiously by an elected trial committee. The trial committee shall hear charges, make recommendations for action to the body which elected it, and then disband.

SECTION 4. All accused persons concerned in disciplinary cases shall have the right to appear, to bring witnesses and testify. The burden of proof shall be on the accuser.

SECTION 5. After hearing the report of the trial committee, the club or leading committee having jurisdiction shall have the right to decide by a two-thirds vote upon any disciplinary measure, including expulsion. Disciplinary measures taken by leading committees are subject to approval by the body to which they are responsible.

There shall be an automatic review of all expulsions by the next higher body.

SECTION 6. Any member who has been subject to disciplinary action has the right to appeal to the next higher body up to the National Convention, whose decision shall be final. Upon receipt of an appeal, the national, state or county committee shall set a hearing and notify the appellant within sixty days from the date of receipt of the appeal except in cases where the appeal is to a state or national convention. Then the appeal shall be acted upon by the convention following the filing of the appeal.

### ARTICLE VIII

#### *Initiation Fees, Dues and Assessments*

SECTION 1. Initiation fees and dues shall be paid according to rates fixed by the National Convention.

SECTION 2. The income from dues and initiation fees shall be apportioned among the various sub-divisions of the Party as determined by the National Convention.

SECTION 3. Special assessments may be levied by the National Convention or by a two-thirds vote of the National Committee. All local or district assessments are prohibited except by special permission of the National Committee.

### ARTICLE IX

SECTION 1. This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of any

regular or special national convention, or by referendum initiated by the National Committee or one-third of the state or district organizations.

State and District organizations or their sub-divisions may adopt by-laws provided they are in accord with the National Constitution.

### ARTICLE X

SECTION 1. The Communist Party is not responsible for any political document, policy, book, article, or any other expression of political opinion except such as are issued by authority of this and subsequent national conventions and its regularly constituted leadership.

*Adopted by the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., February 9-12, 1957.*

## DRAFT PLAN OF WORK

We have just concluded a deep and far-reaching discussion on the problems facing our country, our class and our Party. The time has come to issue a ringing call to all our members to swing into action. The central Resolution adopted at this convention gives us the instrument. It outlines a perspective for the American people; a perspective that arises out of their needs and their demands.

What American doesn't want an end to poverty, and a program of new social advance? Such a program is required by the new age of atomic power, automation and the growth of monopoly, that directly threatens all the advances the American workers have attained through struggle.

The American people in their greatest numbers want peace. Increasingly they are coming to understand that this can only be achieved by once and for all ending the cold war and ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence.

The heroic and valiant struggles of the Negro people in the South is making an increasing impact on the conscience of all Americans. Victory in this gigantic struggle is the number one democratic task facing the nation. It will not be halted. It will gain increasing widespread support until the Negro people have achieved full economic, political and social equality.

Our country's historic and ingrained tradition of democracy gives us full confidence that the American people, now

as in the past, will rise in defense of our Constitution and our Bill of Rights. They will preserve our democratic heritage from all those who would deny or take it away.

Our Convention has united in the view that for those who believe in scientific socialism to contribute to these broad objectives, it requires at this time a consolidation of our Party and an expansion in the circulation of the Marxist press.

Our comrades, however, have given evidence of great dissatisfaction. On the one hand, so much is going on around us in the people's movement. On the other, we are isolated from most of these movements through which lies the only possible road to achieve the objectives laid down in our resolution.

The trade union movement, the Negro people's movement, farm and liberal organizations have already determined and begun to move on many questions that contribute, in large measure, to meeting the immediate needs of the American people. This includes resolutions, actions and campaigns on a great variety of questions. We wish to state flatly—we will endorse and work for all proposals arising from among these organizations that will aid in advancing the interests of the working class and other sections of the people against their common enemy—the monopolies. In order to fulfill this pledge, in order to con-

tribute to these objectives, we must unreservedly enter the main arenas of struggle where these issues are being fought out, in the shops, in the communities, in the national and state legislatures and in the pending municipal elections.

### **Economic Program**

The labor movement has an extensive economic and social program dealing with the needs of the workers and the interests of the people generally. This includes the fight for a minimum wage of \$1.25 per hour; general agreement on the need to organize the unorganized with the South as the main geographical area; opposition to the so-called "right-to-work" laws; opposition to the high cost of living and a need for the Government to investigate profiteering; drought relief and flood control and aid to the family and middle-sized farms in their struggle against monopoly. At the local union level there is an intense concern for the deterioration of on-the-job conditions as a result of heightening speed-up.

However, the demand that is taking shape and gathering increased support in labor's ranks to meet the growing problems of speed-up and automation is the shorter work week with no reduction in pay.

### **Peace**

There is a growing recognition among the people that increased armaments are no guarantee of peace. Throughout the last period the American people have found many ways to

express their deep-seated desires for peace. Among others, it has included opposition to universal military training; the need for big-power negotiations; fear of increasing radioactivity and consequently opposition to continuing A- and H-bomb tests; the need to withdraw troops from all foreign countries; universal disarmament and support for the United Nations. The peace sentiment of the people has not been expressed in direct opposition to the whole imperialist line of the Eisenhower Administration. Most often it has taken the form of opposition on single issues, many times indirectly.

The labor movement, for example, is uncompromising in its demand for a basic change in the tax structure, to lift the unjust burden of taxes from the lower income groups. This comes in direct conflict with the budget based on expanded military spending, military bases and military threats that requires such taxes. The demand for an increase in tax exemptions for those with lower incomes, for an end to the World War II withholding tax, contributes to the struggle for peace.

More directly, there is growing fear of involvement in a new war. There is fear that the Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine for the Middle East will once again bring us to the "brink." There is no desire on the part of the people to enrich the oil monopolies at the expense of American lives.

### **The Negro People**

The violent, illegal attack upon the Negro people in the South must be

## DRAFT PLAN OF WORK

347

stopped. It endangers the entire democratic fabric of American life. The forcible denial of civil rights to the Negro people, the open and cynical Dixiecrat revolt against the Supreme Court decisions stand as an obstacle to the further advance of the labor movement. It rivets the power of extreme reactionary Dixiecrat control on our national Congress and as a consequence obstructs and threatens democratic progress for all the people.

The Supreme Court decisions on desegregation and transportation must be enforced. There must be no interference with the right of the Negro people to vote. Illegal barriers to the organization of the unorganized in the South must be wiped out. This requires the active support of the American people through direct aid for these valiant struggles in the South. It also requires a struggle to achieve full equality and democracy for the Negro people on the job, in the schools and in the community all over the country. It demands a vigorous struggle for the adoption by this Congress of a bi-partisan National Civil Rights program.

Above all, the bombing, shooting and bloody attacks on Negro men, women and children must be stopped. The refusal of local and state administrations to enforce the laws of our land demands that President Eisenhower speak out and direct full Federal intervention to enforce the law and to restore the legal rights of the Negro people.

### **Defend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights**

The latest insidious plot against democracy is the attempt to use the Taft-Hartley law to do the job of the Smith Act which is coming under increasing challenge. The setbacks to McCarthyism by the democratic forces have been insufficient. The time has come to challenge the whole system of repressive legislation that still threatens to envelop our land. It jails Americans for holding unpopular opinions; it denies jobs to those who will not pledge loyalty to un-American committees; it challenges the right of the labor movement to expand; it prohibits free travel between countries.

Among the many tasks required to defend our Constitution and the Bill of Rights outstanding is the demand for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law and amnesty for all political prisoners.

### **Consolidate Our Party**

Our Party can supply the spark, fire and campaign spirit that will aid in achieving the objectives of the people's movement. We can help supply that special ingredient of consciousness and purpose that will shape the struggles on the various issues into a developing anti-monopoly coalition. We say this fully aware of how our Party has been weakened in this last period. We recognize that there has been a letdown in these activities as a result of our internal debate. But the time has come to test, in life, the conclusions

and the tentative opinions arrived at in this discussion. Dedication to these objectives is not enough. We need to get to work with the people. It is only in the course of such mass activity and experience that we will further resolve our internal differences—for these mass tasks and struggles unite all of us.

We live and work in a vast nation composed of regions, states and localities with their own and distinct problems, political and social movements and traditions. The working class and people confront and attempt to meet their problems through community, municipal, state and regional institutions. All the great problems facing the nation are manifest here. It is incumbent upon our Party, in striving to be a more indigenous political movement, to shape its policies and especially its plans of action fully taking the foregoing into account.

More than ever before, our Party needs a mass voice to speak up to the people. Leaflets and pamphlets are not enough. To fulfill these objectives we need an expanded circulation of the Marxist press—*The Worker* and the *Daily Worker*.

On this then we should center our attention. In every shop, union, mass organization and community one or more sections of this program already have considerable support. The task of progressives is to help transform this support into activity.

1. We support the demand for Eisenhower to intervene to stop the bloodshed in the South and enforce the Supreme Court decisions. We sup-

port the bi-partisan demand for a National Civil Rights program.

2. We oppose the Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine of intervention in the Middle East. We support the demand for halting further A- and H-bomb tests.
3. We support the demand for increased tax exemptions for low incomes.
4. We support the demand for a shorter work week with no reduction in pay.
5. We support the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law.
6. We are for amnesty for all political prisoners.
7. We call for an expansion in the circulation of the Marxist press—*The Worker* and the *Daily Worker*.

To guarantee the execution of this program we call on the incoming National Committee to make the fight for this program one of its first orders of business and to take all necessary steps to see that it is carried out. This must include a fresh approach to *how* this program can be carried out.

We call upon the next sessions of the State Conventions to hear a report on this program and to merge it with their local issues and municipal campaigns. For it is only through participation in these important local activities that we can begin to overcome our isolation. We suggest to the State Conventions that they likewise instruct their incoming State Committees to make a State Program of mass work one of its first orders of business and to take steps to guarantee its execu-

tion.

## STATEMENT OF OBSERVERS

At the 16th National Convention, C.P.U.S.A.

February 9-12, 1957

[Following is the text of a statement issued by eight of eleven observers invited to attend the Communist Party's 16th National Convention.]

The undersigned were "observers" at the recent Communist Party convention in New York attending one or several and in the case of some of us all sessions. The initiative for the project of having some non-Communist citizens, who are in fundamental disagreement with much of Communist philosophy and program, present at the convention and free afterward to report in any way they wished, came from A. J. Muste and others, with strong support from Norman Thomas. The suggestion was conveyed to officers of the Communist Party and accepted by them. They issued invitations to persons suggested by Mr. Muste.

Since reference has been made to these matters in the press and elsewhere, we wish to state that the sessions of the convention were democratically conducted with vigorous discussion of all matters brought to the floor. There were many indications

that no individual or group was in a position to control the convention.

All documents coming out of convention committees were made available in mimeographed form to delegates and observers, and were made available to the press immediately after the delegates had acted upon them. The votes on divisions in committees were reported to the delegates. So far as we could tell, Robert's Rules of Order and the Rules adopted by the convention for its own conduct were scrupulously carried out.

Nominations for 20 out of 60 members of the incoming National Committee were made from the floor. There were 46 nominations for the 20 positions. The votes were widely scattered, with no one receiving more than about 70 percent of the votes and the highest votes going to others than nationally known leaders who would presumably have been unanimously elected at old style Communist conventions.

As the press reported, the former national secretary, Eugene Dennis, in his opening report rejected the proposals of the French Communist, Jacques

Duclos, on certain key issues such as the primacy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Duclos has been regarded as an important channel for conveying the views of the Soviet Communist leaders to Western parties. This time there were no recantations when the Duclos position was disclosed, as used to be the case. Refusal to follow certain of the Duclos "directives" was sustained by the convention by a two-thirds vote or better when matters of this kind came before it.

It is always necessary to probe beneath the words of political conventions to determine what they mean in terms of solid political reality, and, in view of the many admissions of gross Communist errors in the past by this convention, it is specially valid in this case to suspend judgment as to the extent to which the Communist Party has achieved independence and moved toward democratic socialism, and to let the actual behavior of the Party and its members determine the verdict. We deplore the fact that the convention arrived at no clear condemnation of the military intervention in Hungary.

However, in view of the upheavals in Poland and Hungary, the open airing in the *Daily Worker* in recent months of wide divergences among CP leaders and members, and the conduct of the recent convention as we observed it, to suppose, as some apparently do, that the ferment in the Communist

movement here and abroad is merely an elaborate stage effect and that nothing is really happening seems to us to fly in the face of the evidence.

Finally, we wish to protest vigorously against the continuance by Senator Eastland's Senate Internal Security subcommittee of the un-American practice of governmental inquisition into political opinions and activities, as instanced by the summons to Eugene Dennis to appear next Monday before the subcommittee. That the security of this country is actually threatened by anything that may have happened at the convention of the drastically weakened Communist Party is an idea which it is not possible to take seriously.

The signers of the statement were:

A. J. Muste, secretary emeritus, Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Dorothy Day, editor, *Catholic Worker*.

Roy Finch, chairman, War Resisters League.

Stringfellow Barr, lecturer and publicist.

Lyle Tatum, peace secretary for Middle Atlantic Region, American Friends Service Committee.

Bayard Rustin, executive secretary, War Resisters League.

Alfred Hassler, director of publications, Fellowship of Reconciliation.

George Willoughby, director, Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors.



GREETINGS TO THE CONVENTION

351

**GREETINGS**

**To the 16th National Convention, C.P.U.S.A.**

**February 9-12, 1957**

In addition to those printed in the text, greetings were also received from the following parties abroad:

Albanian Party of Labor	Communist Party of Great Britain
Communist Party of Argentina	Workers Party of Guatemala
Communist Party of Australia	Socialist Workers Party of Hungary
Communist Party of Belgium	Communist Party of Israel
Communist Party of Bolivia	Communist Party of Japan
Communist Party of Bulgaria	Workers Party of Korea
Communist Party of Chile	Communist Party of Netherlands
Communist Party of Colombia	United Workers Party of Poland
Popular Socialist Party of Cuba	Workers Party of Romania
Communist Party of Denmark	Communist Party of Sweden
Communist Party of Ecuador	Communist Party of Trieste
Communist Party of El Salvador	Communist Party of Uruguay
Communist Party of Finland	Communist Party of Venezuela
Socialist Unity Party of Germany	

*For further information about the Communist Party, write to:*

NATIONAL OFFICE, C.P.U.S.A.

23 West 26th Street

New York 10, N. Y.



## **THREE BASIC DOCUMENTS**

---

### ***Proceedings of the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A.***

This 352-page volume gives a full picture of this widely-reported Convention, including the contributions of every speaker in the discussion on the various hotly-debated resolutions, etc., as well as the Main Political Resolution, the Constitution, the Draft Plan of Work, Statement of Observers, greetings, etc.

**Price \$2.75**

---

### ***Main Political Resolution of the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A.***

Presents the thinking of the Communist Party on the situation today, the path ahead, the Communists and the labor movement, the struggle for Negro freedom, the American road to Socialism, and problems of the Party. In addition, the booklet contains the Resolution on Social Democracy adopted by the Convention.

**Price 50¢**

---

### ***Constitution of the Communist Party of the United States of America***

Full text of the Constitution adopted by the 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A. following many months of intensive discussion during which the aims, role, character and structure of the Party were subjected to the fullest and freest study and criticism.

**Price 15¢**

---

**NEW CENTURY PUBLISHERS • 832 Broadway, New York 3**