

A NEGRO WOMAN delegate arose on the floor of the recently closed convention of the Communist Party and said:

"This resolution (on the Negro question) has in it what the Negro people want rather than what we want the Negro to want."

There was generous applause for the delegate's remark and the convention overwhelmingly adopted the resolution after discussion. In essence the resolution took into account the reality confronting American Negroes and simply pledged support to all efforts now being made to further the fight for freedom. It recognized the enormous contribution made by the resurgent Negro movement and its leaders to the fight by all sections of the population, especially the labor movement, and said that Communists would do everything possible to win allies for the Negro people in these other sections.

There was nothing in that resolution that would not in normal times be applauded by any Negro or any white American interested in gaining full citizenship rights for the Negroes. But we are far from normalcy; so there were demurrers to the resolution's implications.

BASED on press reports of what happened at the Communist Party convention, Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, reacted as follows:

**"We reject their support and do not need it. What the party seeks is confusion, not solution."**

(Incidentally, there were similar reactions from leaders of the International Garment Workers Union and from Americans for Democratic Action concerning the convention resolution on Social Democracy.)

Dr. Wilkins assumes, I take it, that in adopting this resolution, the Communists have been directed to "invade" the NAACP or that the party itself will seek acceptance as an official NAACP ally. But this would be a false assumption and contrary to the language and spirit of the resolution adopted. The convention, among other things, said quite clearly:

**"Communists are also called upon to make their maximum independent contribution towards winning the just demands of the Negro rights."**

# On the Way

by Abner W. Berry



## A Premature "We Reject"

And at another point the resolution recalled that it has "been the honorable task of Communists to set a high standard of devotion to and energetic leadership in the fight for Negro rights."

THERE WAS implied in the resolution that there would be no separate organizations set up by Communists through which they would seek to steer the Negro people's movement, but rather that they would support those organization, such as the NAACP and similar groups in the South, which were in the field.

Communists in labor unions are thus pledged to get their unions to support the NAACP, to better express the alliance of labor with the Negro people. Communists in communities are pledged to aid in increasing the membership and financial strength of the NAACP, whether as members or not. In a word, if Communists follow the resolution, they will, in the words of the woman delegate, do "what the Negro people want," and fight for what they want.

This is stated explicitly in a section of the resolution which reads:

**"It is 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 unrestrained support to, and to take an active part in, those programs and techniques of struggle which now embrace and propel into action the great majority of the Negro people."**

It will be hard for anyone to lead into this resolution a plan to "infiltrate" or to "capture" any organization. For what is involved here is the independent

activity of the Communist Party and its members. There was no indication that the party was outlining a program for the NAACP; on the contrary, there were every evidence in the resolution that such a proposal would have been voted down. Now, if there had been such a proposition adopted, containing what the Communist Party thought the NAACP ought to do, then the leaders of the NAACP would have been justified in rejecting it. But as matters stand now, Mr. Wilkins' rejection of "support" is like something written on the wind. For to "reject" the support referred to in the resolution would mean to screen every mass meeting held anywhere and examine the source of every contribution.

The Communists have not put forward a program to make Communism a trend in every organization fighting for democracy in the U. S.; they have simply sought to chart a path that would increase Communists' contributions to the advance of democracy in the U. S. And if there is a political trend led by Communists in the U. S. which independently supports every effort of the Negroes to free themselves for jimmecrowism, it will be hard to "reject" it. There might be, of course, sharp disagreements expressed with Communists; there will be verbal attacks against it; but this ought to be the normal give-and-take of political life. It would seem that in such an atmosphere, devoid of the hysterias fanned by reaction and used to deny democratic rights to whites as well as Negroes, the U. S. could make seven-league strides towards the goal of freedom and equality for all. At least, that seemed to be the meaning of what the Communist convention decided.