

A CRUCIAL CONVENTION

THE COMMUNIST Party has just concluded what may have been the most crucial convention in its 38 years of existence.

It was not alone the members of the party who were concerned with the outcome of the convention. Never before has a Communist Party convention been viewed with so much interest throughout the country—symbolized by the unprecedented attendance of a group of non-Communist observers from the civil liberties and peace movements.

We are in no position the day after a convention of this kind to give it the full discussion it deserves. Its four-day proceedings included many important decisions. Among these were the charting of an American road of peaceful, democratic and constitutional struggle for socialism; reaffirmation of the party form of organization; agreement on the main causes of the party's isolation and the main direction for overcoming it; the need to increase the party's contribution to the Negro freedom movement; an independent approach to the universals of scientific socialism, Marxist-Leninist theory; and a new basis for cementing international workingclass solidarity through a relationship of independence and equality among all Marxist political parties throughout the world.

The convention was preceded by almost a year of intensive discussion such as the Communist Party had never experienced. On many questions the differences had severely strained the unity of the organization.

Now the convention has been held and the party has emerged from it without the rupture which reactionary foes of the party hoped for and which, under the circumstances, could have destroyed it.

If this was accomplished, it was because the membership had a will for unity which developed around a program for breaking with sectarian practices and for moving forward in accordance with basic principles.

The convention decisions were reached in an atmosphere of free discussion such as many other American organizations could well envy.

The convention ended on a note of unity sounded by leaders who before the convention had differed on many questions dealt with in the Draft Resolution. They called too for implementing the convention decisions in an atmosphere of democratic discussion of remaining differences, free from bitterness and factionalism.

We wish the members and new leadership of the Communist Party well in their determination to go forward now to build their party and test the decisions made this week.