

# C. P. Resolutions Sought Way To Restore Unity and Influence

By A. B. MAGIL

(This is the final article in a series of three on the Communist Party convention).

WILL the American Communists be able to find their way back to the high-road of American social and political life, trail-blazing again as in the past? Can they become a socialist yeast within the working class, helping to raise the people's struggles to new heights? Only the future can provide the answer. The recent Communist convention marked a beginning—but only a beginning—in the task of regeneration. Before there could be a future for the Communists, they first had to face up to the reality of their present. They had to examine its meaning, assess the cause of their decline and determine the path toward new vitality and growth. This the recent convention did.

For nearly a year before the February convention sharp controversy had raged within the party over the nature and cause of past errors and what to do about them. This controversy was made all the more acute by the shocking revelations from the socialist countries which underlined the folly of past uncritical attitudes toward those countries and toward other Communist parties.

Virtually everybody agreed that in the decade after World War II the party had put itself way out in left field. That is, its political estimates exaggerated the negative and understated the positive, and its tactical proposals were mostly too far ahead of where all but a tiny minority of the American people were ready to go. This is what is called left sectarianism, which has plagued the American Marxist movement since its origin in the 19th Century.

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THERE was also general agreement that these left sectarian errors had helped the reactionary forces isolate the party from the masses of the American people during the period when cold war hysteria and McCarthyism were riding high.

But there were sharp differences among Communist leaders and members over the extent and nature of the leftist errors, over the degree to which the party was menaced by tendencies in the opposite direction, and over what changes needed to be made in party structure, program, policies and tactics.

The section on the party in the convention's main resolution opens with a discussion of the party's achievements during this difficult period in the fight for civil liberties, Negro rights, peace, and in labor's economic struggles. Then follows a discussion of the errors made in the fight for peace and against the fascist danger.

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IT WAS in regard to the nature of the errors that the greatest controversy developed at the convention. Finally agreement was reached on the following:

"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 objec-

tive 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."

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ONE of the convention resolutions that provides important guidelines for combatting left sectarian tendencies, as well as for advancing the perspective of an eventual united movement for socialism, is the one on Social Democracy. There is no space to summarize the fertile ideas in this resolution, but suffice it to say that it projects a new positive—yet critical—approach to those groupings that constitute the American counterpart of what is known in Europe as Social Democracy. These are primarily certain rightwing trade union leaders, rightwing Socialists and certain liberal forces.

Another resolution of the greatest importance was the one on the struggle for Negro freedom as the

key to strengthening American democracy. This examines both the achievements and errors of the Communists in this field, discusses forms and methods of struggle, and presents a program of action for the support of Communists and all other progressive Americans.

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A MAJOR issue in the months of discussion prior to the convention was bureaucracy and the undemocratic practices that had grown up in the Communist Party. Many members blamed the basic organizational principle of all Communist parties, democratic centralism; others insisted that the principle itself was valid and necessary, but had been wrongly applied, with too much emphasis on centralism and too little on democracy.

The new party constitution adopted by the convention retains the essence of democratic centralism, but considerably modifies its application so as to give greater authority to the lower bodies, provide for the involvement of the rank and file in policymaking, and guarantee the right of criticism and dissent. In this writer's opinion, on the score of democracy, the new Communist constitution bears favorable comparison with the constitution of any trade union or any other organization in the country.

All this is only a brief and hasty summary of the achievements of a convention which attracted nationwide attention and was described by eight non-Communist observers as "democratically conducted."

However, the question still remains: was this convention prolog or epilog? The reactionaries who hoped that the party would emerge divided like ancient Gaul into three parts were sortly disappointed. Nevertheless, real unity around the convention decisions still has to be achieved. And the fight to rebuild the Communist Party, to win for it important influence among the American workers, to make it an effective force for peace, democracy and socialism has just begun.

## AMERICAN FLYER

(Continued from Page 7)

year on the dictator's behalf, and is still on the payroll.

I do not mean to imply that all or any of the above named have base motives for serving Trujillo. I only raise the question of the propriety of their serving in a capacity to lend respectability to a regime which plots and carries out murders of American citizens and guests.

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A NUMBER of other peculiar

paper. The lapse of time after the patently false charge of communism inevitably leads one to suspect an element of collusion between some U. S. officials and the Dominican regime somewhere along the line.

U. S. private investments in the Dominican Republic currently run to about \$90 million. The following companies have sizeable operations: the South Puerto Rico Sugar Co.; Aloca; Barium Steel Corp.; Pepsi-Cola; Coca-Cola; Canada Dry; Pan American Airways; Lock-