

STATEMENT of the NEW YORK STATE COMMITTEE

THE NEW YORK STATE COMMITTEE, COMMUNIST PARTY, AT ITS MEETING HELD DECEMBER 8, 1956, ADOPTED THE ATTACHED STATEMENT OF ITS POSITION ON CERTAIN QUESTIONS OF SEC-

TION FOUR OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION. CERTAIN AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT RESOLUTION FOLLOW THE STATEMENT.

These statements, discussed at the December 8th meeting of the State Committee, are presented for discussion by the membership in the spirit of the National Committee statement and amendments published on December 24th.

I a. The vote on this statement was as follows :

25 for report
6 against
no abstentions

b. A minority report was also submitted, with the following vote:

5 for report
27 against
1 abstention

II The vote on the amendments is indicated after each amendment attached hereto.

I INTRODUCTION

We approach the 16th National Convention of the CPUSA with the profound feeling that it may mark a turning point in our history. Months of discussion prior to and since the publication of the Draft Resolution have revealed substantial differences in our ranks, in the evaluation of the past, and on questions of program, outlook and perspective for the future. Discussion has probed more deeply than ever before in the history of our movement. This was inevitable. It involves a review of the past decade since re-constitution, as well as an appraisal of major aspects of our work in earlier years. It reflects the deep ferment in the organization and the compelling urge to re-examine all questions of theory, program, policy and perspective in light of new conditions at home and in the world.

Discussion on the situation in the party was organized belatedly by the National Committee. This was also true of the State Committee. Views were crystallized in leading bodies that ultimately found expression in the Draft Resolution without providing an opportunity for the active and timely participation of the membership. As a result, tho we are on

the eve of the Party conventions, there are many questions that have not as yet been clearly defined, no less adequately discussed.

We submit this statement of views in the hope that it will contribute to a more fruitful discussion of the basic issues.

II PARTY CRISIS: NATURE AND CAUSES

It is generally agreed that whatever the doubts in the past, the Party is in a serious crisis as a result of its extreme isolation from the masses of American people and as a further result of the negative impact of the 20th Congress, the revelations of Khrushchev and the recent events in Hungary. The recognition of this crisis is the beginning of wisdom. For our part, we firmly believe that we have the capacity to resolve this crisis, tho it will be a long and difficult process. The depth and seriousness of the crisis is revealed most clearly in the relation of the party to the working class and peoples movement in America. It would be one thing, indeed if our isolation was the product of the ascendancy of reaction and heavy setbacks to the peoples movement; if it was the product of a disorganized labor movement and a decline of militant struggle. This is not the case. The opposite is true.

The peoples movement is growing in strength. Labor is united for the first time in many years . . . 16 million strong. A powerful movement has been unfolding among the Negro people with the support of labor and liberal forces around the crucial issue of civil rights. Millions of Americans are beginning to understand that this struggle in the South will determine the future of American democracy. The strength of the labor and peoples movement was evidenced in the '56 elections despite the victory of Eisenhower. A new realignment of progressive forces in our country is under way.

These developments point to the widening gap that exists between the Party and mass movement, hence the need for thoughtful and determined action if we are to emerge again as a vital force in the working class and peoples movement.

The nature and root cause of the errors made by the Party which contributed to this situation are analyzed in the

Draft Resolution. We agree with this analysis. We believe that the point of view which ascribes our isolation primarily to the objective situation would bind us to the past and perpetuate this crisis.

We endorse the following analysis in the Draft Resolution:

"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 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." (Italics, Draft Resolution, Pg. 53)

This process has been under way since the Draft Resolution of 1952 with positive results in many industries and other fields of mass work in our State. This was further advanced following the 1954 Program.

III FIGHT FOR CHANGE

With this understanding we believe the preconditions for any advance require:

1. That we give a clear-cut and unqualified support to the proposition that we are an independent party of American Marxists dedicated to Socialism whose "only allegiance is to the working class and people of our country."

A major source of our un-Marxist dogmatism was our uncritical reliance upon the Communist Parties of other countries, particularly of the Soviet Union, to interpret Marxism-Leninism for us.

Too often we tended to accept the views of the CPSU and other parties without undertaking to determine whether these views or positions applied to America. Too often we made it easier for the enemy to charge us falsely as foreign agents or lead friends and potential allies to view us as apologists for the Soviet Union.

We stand for the independence of Parties that apply Marxism-Leninism to their own countries; the study of all contributions of all Marxists the world over; and especially the CPSU.

Wrong relations in the past proved harmful not only to ourselves as Marxists. It was not helpful to the Soviet Union. True working class brotherhood demands an independent attitude toward socialist lands—while remaining warm supporters of these socialist countries.

Such independence and critical fraternalism is a major pre-condition for our emergence from our crisis.

2. That we develop a creative approach to Marxism, one which uses the methodology of science as Marx and Lenin used it, and break with the doctrinaire, unscientific methods of the past.

Our theoretical work has been mainly the mechanical fitting of the facts, relationships and traditions of American life into a ready-made doctrinal pattern.

Scientific methodology, as Lenin repeatedly emphasized, requires that the *starting point* of theory be the concrete study of our nation's history and reality, its economy and its political system in all their complex and rich detail. Marxism-Leninism is the tool which aids us in studying and analyzing our nation's development and conditions.

Marxism-Leninism is a living theory; the use of the dialectical and historical materialist method for "the concrete analysis of concrete conditions."

The theory of Marxism can never be frozen at any moment into universals always and everywhere true. It can never be fixed eternally on the basis of the experience of the working class of one or another country. It does not exist codified in books, but lives only when it guides and is changed by practice—"in the particulars of class conditions and of the concrete peculiarities of history."—Lenin.

A pre-condition for emerging from our crisis is that we "take into account living reality, precise and concrete facts, and not get stuck on the theory of yesterday." (Lenin). Thus our way must be the use of the weapon of Marxism-Leninism, the interpretation and development of this body of theory as it applies to our situation in America.

We endorse the following section of the Draft Resolution (p. 55):

"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. Basing ourselves on these Marxist-Leninist principles as interpreted by the Communist Party of our country, 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. The Party must distinguish better between the additions to Marxist theory made by Lenin which are valid for all countries and those specific aspects of Lenin's writings which reflect exclusively certain unique features of the Russian revolution or of Soviet society.

"Likewise, the Communist Party will have to be bolder in re-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."

3. That we take the necessary measures to strengthen the democratic process in the Party and eliminate bureaucracy. To this end we recommend the abolition of the concepts of democratic centralism and monolithic unity. Whether the bureaucratic evils were inherent in these concepts or were the result of incorrect application is not the main issue. What is uppermost is the need to define the nature of the organization as a democratic working class organization with a common ideology which functions on the basis of majority rule and guarantees the right of dissent.

To this end we further recommend that all leading committees shall be composed primarily of representatives elected directly by the next lower organizations in order to achieve the closest fusion of leadership and membership in policy making bodies.

These measures we believe will strengthen the cohesiveness of the organization and its fighting capacity.

We support the concept of a centralized national organization which is guided by a common policy democratically arrived at, together with the right of each District and its subordinate organizations, the countries, sections and clubs to determine policy within their own spheres and within the framework of national policy.

4. These changes in concept must be accompanied by an

even more vigorous and consistent effort to reestablish the broadest ties through increased activity in every field. Our whole leadership and membership must be imbued with the need to participate in all struggles to help advance the unity of the labor and people's movements and the building of a new democratic coalition in America.

The fight for peace, civil liberties, the issue around Rule 22 in Congress, the many economic struggles of the trade unions, the need for schools and housing and other social issues call for our full and energetic support.

Yes, we wholeheartedly support these changes. Without these minimum reforms there is a serious danger that the Party will suffer further losses, and deteriorate into a sect. There is little margin left.

Are these changes sufficient? The answer to this question depends on what we determine is our perspective.

IV FUTURE PERSPECTIVE—UNITED PARTY OF SOCIALISM

Basing itself on the changed relations of forces which have developed on a world scale during the past decade and a half, the Draft Resolution correctly sets forth a general outlook for the world and for our country which differs considerably from that we have held in the past. It notes that the "prospect has opened up of bringing the cold war to an end and ushering in a new era of peaceful coexistence and competition of different social systems." It also notes that "the possibility exists for the peaceful and constitutional transition to socialism" in the United States. These, of course, are perspectives which can be realized only through powerful struggles by the working class and people's forces in our country and abroad. They are by no means certainties; but the important thing is that they are real possibilities. They define an over-all perspective which our Party must fight to help realize in life.

What do we see, therefore, in the period ahead?

We see the forging, through giant and united struggles of the workers, Negro people's movement and other forces of our country, an anti-monopoly coalition. We believe that a new socialist left will grow out of these struggles and in turn will assist and advance the people's coalition. We believe that the persistent and organized development of Socialist consciousness must proceed hand-in-hand with the forging of the people's coalition.

Will the changes in our Party alone bring about this Socialist movement?

Should we not seek out every possible path for more rapid development of such an organized Socialist movement, even if the immediate perspective of united action is as yet extremely limited?

What is our relationship to this concept of a more effective movement for Socialism in America?

There is one view that bases itself on the idea that the Communist Party remains the only instrument for Socialist transformation of society in America. It rejects the view of the National Draft Resolution that we were wrong in the past in recognizing that other forces for Socialism existed and could come into being. It feels that the Communist Party remains and is the revolutionary vanguard of the working class—though diminished in members and influence and that in time, with changes in the objective situation, it will grow into the mass party of Socialism capable of winning the working class in the struggle for Socialism.

We believe there is, as opposed to the first view, another alternative—looking to the creation of a broader Socialist movement in our country, or what is referred to in the Draft Resolution as the United Party of Socialism. Without having the blue-prints or the form of such a Socialist party or movement, we think it necessary to begin now to explore, make contact with, seek joint activity with other socialist trends in our nation. We recognize that at this time it would be premature and wrong to attempt to merge the small and relatively ineffective socialist groupings in the country. But we believe that a process of stimulation and exploration would reveal new possibilities, especially in the labor movement which must be the foundation of an effective Socialist organization.

Even now there are many thousands of workers, farmers, Negro people, intellectuals, students, middle class people who have a Socialist outlook, but who will not identify themselves with the Communist Party now or in the immediate future.

We believe that eventually such a movement can emerge as a genuine vanguard in the theoretical and programmatic sense and in terms of mass political leadership.

We do not propose a categorical answer to all the real and challenging questions involved in this changed outlook. We do propose an approach that on the one hand does not negate the old, but on the other provides for the opening of the new.

There are those who argue that such a perspective will result in the liquidation of our Party. We believe the contrary is true—that it provides our members with the historic mission of Marxists—that looks to the development of a union between the Socialist movement and the working class.

There are those who argue that the dissolution of the Party is the prerequisite for anything new. We disagree. We believe our Party has a vital contribution to make in furthering this objective. Furthermore, in the evolution of a new socialist movement in the USA it is possible that the Communist Party may become absorbed in this movement or it may develop cooperative ties with it while maintaining its distinct Marxist-Leninist position.

We believe therefore that a bold approach on this question of perspective and a new broader party of socialism provides the most effective answer to the needs of the working class and of our country and clarifies the role of our organization in this period. It knits the two together. It encourages a positive approach to our past history and its many accomplishments; and to the future history of the working class and socialist movement in America.

V THE PARTY

In the interest of strengthening the Party and its role in the crucial fight for peace, democracy and socialism in our country, we advocate change of name of the Party and the transformation of the Party into a non-party political action association.

We advocate these changes:

1. Because it will contribute to the struggle for our acceptance and legality among the masses. We do not view change of name and form as gimmicks that will transform our relations. This is clearly not the case. We do believe that it represents the beginning of a process—taking all our changes and reforms into account, on theory and program, on the issues of independence, on internal democracy that in time will help bring about a change in our relationships for the better.

The contribution we will make in the next period in the

mass movement will depend in large measure on the efforts we make and the success of these efforts to achieve a greater measure of legality for the organization and its members.

2. Because it represents a form of transition that would facilitate the struggle for a new and broader party of socialism. It would dramatize to masses of non-party people that the position stated in the Draft Resolution that we do not have a monopoly on building socialism is genuine and true and not a maneuver. It would give greater latitude and encourage other forces to come forward and organize for socialism. In effect we are saying by this change we are but one group in America that believes in Socialism and we are prepared to make a modest contribution together with you, or independently, in cooperation and sympathy with you, to advance this aim. With this change we will place our movement on a better footing with radical and socialist-minded Americans today. Can this be done within the framework of the Party form? Possibly. We believe however it can be done more effectively by such change. And time is important.

3. Because given these changes and the perspective outlined above on the "United Party of Socialism" we believe there is a greater possibility to maintain our ranks intact—stem the losses in the Party and thereby halt the trend to liquidation. We believe it opens up new opportunity to appeal to hundreds and thousands of former members who dropped, not because of fear, but because of our many wrong policies and undemocratic practices in the past.

In recommending a Political Action organization we wish to make it quite clear that we view it as a Marxist organization that would take an active part in the day to day struggles of the people and propagate its ultimate aims of Socialism. It would be an association of Communists, following class-struggle policies, and based on the working class as the most decisive and progressive force in our country. Its program would emphasize the fight for Negro rights, and seek in every way to cement the alliance of the working class and the Negro people as the corner-stone of democratic advance. And it would seek to rally all other democratic sections of American society—the farmers, intellectuals and other middle strata—around the leadership of the working class. The name of our Party would be changed to correspond to this change in form.

We present these ideas for discussion.

We do not consider that these are the only ideas that will solve the present crisis of the Party.

We are also mindful of the fact that opportunity has been lacking for a full discussion on these questions—hence an unreadiness on the part of many who favor change to decide on what changes should be made at this time. In part this was due to the manner in which it was virtually excluded from the discussion in the Draft Resolution.

Above all we are interested in stimulating the widest discussion on what changes are necessary.

We do believe that these changes and the general perspective outlined here will enable the Party to play a more effective role among the masses in the period ahead—a period that will no doubt witness a sharpening of the class struggle on every front.

To conclude. As we discuss our problems, we see a ferment among Communists the world over—no longer the oneness or monolithic rigidity of position so characteristic of the past.

For our part we believe it reflects a tremendous turning over and re-evaluation of ideas, theories, programs and relationships formerly held sacred and which stultified progress. We believe it is a healthy aspect of the present crisis confronting not only our Party but Communists in other countries as well.

We will find our way, we are confident, if we keep open the channels of discussion and encourage the freest interchange of ideas.

In this testing period a closer relation has been established between the leadership and the membership than ever before. This must become a permanent feature of our work in the future.

The situation in the Party is difficult indeed.

We present these views as our judgment on how best to approach this situation and ultimately resolve it.

AMENDMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED:

The following amendments were acted upon.

1. That we place as a central duty of our Party strong efforts toward effectuating a regroupment and eventual unification of various Socialist currents in our country. We endorse the general outlook of the Draft Resolution toward the eventual formation of a united party of Socialism as the orientation which should guide our work in the period ahead.

Resolution passed: 30 for, 7 against, no abstentions.

2. That we support the adoption of a constitution at our forthcoming national convention which would guarantee a fully democratic organization based on majority rule and safeguarding the right to participate in the making of policy and the right to dissent. Our organization should be guided by a common ideology and common policies, and by unity of action arrived at through the democratic procedures established by the constitution. The Party would function through one national center with local autonomy, within the framework of national policy, in local matters.

The democratic principles of organization outlined above makes it possible and necessary to discard the concepts of "democratic centralism" and "monolithic unity" without sacrificing effective unity of action.

Resolution passed: 33 for, 5 against, no abstentions.

3. That we consider the transformation of our Party to that of a political action association, guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism as we interpret, develop and apply them to the conditions of our country. It would be an association of Communists, following class struggle policies, and based on the working class as the most decisive and progressive force in our country. Its program would emphasize the fight for Negro rights, and seek in every way to cement the alliance of the working class and the Negro people as the corner-stone of democratic advance. And it would seek to rally all other democratic sections of American society—the farmers, intellectuals and other middle strata—around the leadership of the working class. The name of our Party would be changed to correspond to this change in structure.

Resolution passed: 29 for, 6 against, 4 abstentions.

MINORITY REPORT

STATEMENT OF THE MINORITY OF THE NEW YORK STATE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY ON THE PROPOSALS OF THE MAJORITY OF THE NEW YORK STATE COMMITTEE TO CHANGE THE COMMUNIST PARTY INTO A "NON-PARTY" ASSOCIATION.

This statement deals with the section of the Draft Resolution *On the Party*, to which amendments have been proposed by the majority of the New York State Committee of the Communist Party. It does not deal with other sections of the Resolution which estimate the Party situation as a whole, its activities, weaknesses and errors. It is limited to the Party.

Our party is in crisis. This is generally recognized by the membership. The crisis arose, in our opinion, from the severe onslaught on the Party by reaction over a period of a decade. This is well known; although in the somewhat relaxed atmosphere following the set-back to McCarthyism and the abatement of the cold war some forget this hard period of persecution in which the Party was virtually illegalized. These factors caused a considerable loss of members, severely weakened our organization and isolated it from the broad mass organizations and movements. Heavily contributing to the isolation, particularly with regard to the labor and people's movements were the series of left sectarian mistakes, which are receiving a full airing in the discussion. They must be kept firmly in mind and corrected. Not recognized sufficiently, however, are the right opportunist and liquidationist weaknesses and errors during the past period—which have become more marked at present. A central factor in the Party crisis was the revelation of the shocking and grave errors of the later part of the Stalin era, and recently the tragic Hungarian events.

Every crisis and inner controversy goes through stages. It is important for the membership to be aware of them. The first stage, as is natural to crises, was marked by much confusion, especially due to the Krushchev report on Stalin and the estimate given of the Party's position and tasks by the April meeting of the National Committee. A second stage was reached with the adoption of the draft resolution by the National Committee in which sharp differences were evidenced in the leadership regarding the estimate of the period under review, the nature and role of our errors, the part played by the objective situation and the changes proposed in relation to Marxism-Leninism. The third and present stage came with the acute differences over the Hungarian events and as a result of the all-out campaign by the main leaders of the New York State Committee to go far beyond the proposals of the draft resolution and to transform our Party into a "non-Party association." This campaign has produced a number of basic amendments to the draft resolution adopted by the majority of the New York State Committee and which are being circulated for support of the New York membership. They include the following:

1. To change the Party into a "non-Party" Political Action Association.
2. To change its name.
3. To discard the *principles* of democratic centralism.
4. To reject the principle of the Party as the vanguard of the working class.
5. To make the organization of a "United Party of Socialism" a "central duty" of the Party at the present

time. The majority statement advocates the change to a non-Party Political Association as a "form of transition" that would facilitate the "struggle for a new and broader Party of Socialism."

We make this statement because we firmly believe that these proposals are not those needed, and that they can do great harm. They represent a dangerous turn away from a Marxist-Leninist Party. They reject basic Marxist concepts of a party and of party organization in line with a marked tendency of some to renounce Marxism-Leninism. They are unrealistic and can only lead to the liquidation of the Party. We urge the State Committee to withdraw these proposals, as they do not correspond to the already-expressed wishes of large sections of the membership in New York and throughout the country, and can serve only to sharpen differences and increase the moods of pessimism, demoralization and disorganization.

CHANGES ARE ESSENTIAL

Change is essential in our party work, policies, tactics and inner life. But the question is, what kind of change? We must make changes which strengthen the Party, not weaken it, heighten its role in the mass and peoples' struggles, not reduce it, build it as a Marxist-Leninist organization, not destroy it.

The fact that the Party is weakened and isolated today does not diminish the necessity for a Marxist Party. It is a matter of greatest concern that our ties with the masses have been weakened. But this is not fatal. It has happened before in our history, and in the life of other parties. The fact that the Party has been able to survive and maintain its organization, and function publicly despite unprecedented and unceasing attacks, is a tribute to the Party and its courageous fight.

We must also take heart from the experience of other Communist Parties such as those in China, Italy, France and Germany. Their ranks, though decimated by the enemy and by their own mistakes, were patiently rebuilt so that today they are the acknowledged political leaders of their working classes and democratic forces, both under capitalism and socialism. With the defeat of McCarthyism and the abatement of reaction, conditions today are more favorable for advancing the Party and its influence. We must seize this moment for increased work and activity, for resolutely rebuilding the Party, for consolidating its organization, its leadership and its contact with the masses. The gap between the growing mass movements and the Party can be closed only by strengthening the work and activity of the Party, and *not* by its liquidation.

The changes needed are becoming clear to the Party. They have been expressed in part in the draft resolution. Others are being made in the current stage of the discussion. We need decisive changes which embody the lessons of the past and the requirements of the new world situation—changes to make the Party a vital democratic organization based on the will of the membership, which not only elects leadership but effectively shares in the making and execution of policy. We need to ensure real criticism and self-criticism in the Party and guarantee the right of dissent while abiding by majority decisions—an indispensable condition of genuine democracy.

We need to refresh and reinvigorate the leadership on all levels. We need to bring into our leadership more industrial workers, Negro and white, and people with experience in mass

struggles. Shop workers must not only be elected to leadership, but enabled by the whole system of work to play an increasingly decisive role in the main spheres of Party work.

We need a sharp break with dogmatism, doctrinairism and sectarianism in theory and practice. We need changes to link the Party with the masses at all costs by altering our tactics, attitudes and methods of work, so as to widen our united front relations. We need to heighten the Party initiative and its stimulating role in the people's movements, and curb tendencies to rely on spontaneity.

We must stress and strongly bring forward the concept that our Party is an independent Marxist party "whose allegiance is to the working class and people of our country." At the same time we must not relax our attachment to the great principle of working class internationalism, realizing that the true interests of our country vitally require and are served in the development of the bonds of solidarity among the peoples of the world. Our relations with other Communist Parties must be on the basis of independence, with the understanding that international solidarity and fraternalism does not exclude but requires friendly and constructive criticism. At the same time, such criticism must have "nothing in common with those who depreciate the epic achievements of the USSR, People's China, and other socialist countries, or those who seek to engender hostility to socialism at home or abroad. . . . (Draft Resolution)." These and other changes are essential to maintain, strengthen and build our Party as a Marxist-Leninist organization. We differ with the majority of the New York State Committee because their proposals can only weaken, undermine and liquidate the Party.

WHAT IS A PARTY?

A Party is the reflection of and political representative of the interests and aspirations of a definite class. As long as classes exist and a struggle goes on between them, the working class needs a political Party that represents its class interests, defends its immediate needs, struggles for and wins reforms, and works to prepare it organizationally, politically and ideologically to win political power and establish Socialism. Marxism holds that the requirement for doing away with class oppression and exploitation is for the working class to come into possession of political power as the ruling class in society. But a class is represented in government by means of a Party—a Party which has earned, or been given, the mandate of the class to represent it. Therefore, those who say that we do not need a Party are required to answer whether or not they foresee or agree with the perspective that the working class must become the ruling class in society and in government as the precondition and guarantee of its emancipation.

Some say that "party" is not an American term. But it is American. No parties existed anywhere in the world before the Federalist Party in the United States (Henry S. Commager, in the *N. Y. Times*). Also, it must be emphasized that minority parties are American, and have played an important role in our history.

To abandon the Party form of our organization also suggests that we have discarded the democratic struggle for a multi-party political choice for the American people, and that we have committed ourselves to the permanence of the two-party system. If we abandon the struggle for a multi-party system, then how do we envision an anti-monopoly people's government coming into power reflecting the leading influence of the working class?

The program of the anti-monopoly coalition will be influenced in a socialist direction only if the Socialist-Communist component of the coalition registers its presence and strength by the size of its vote, the number of its represen-

tatives elected to public office and by its influence and struggle. The percentage of votes and elected officials, and its mass support, will reflect our strength in the coalition. Communists will have to stand and be counted before the American people, and be judged by their platform, program and work.

THE U.S.A. NEEDS A COMMUNIST PARTY

Only a political Party, and one that acts as a vanguard, can rightly respond to the issues of the day, participate in the political arena to the fullest extent (finding legal forms where it is made illegal or semi-legal) and help to clarify, organize, educate, and rally the masses into an anti-monopoly coalition. This is because it is a Party based on an advanced theory, consists of class conscious, militant people, participates in the struggles of the working class and its allies, and spreads the idea of socialism in the ranks of the working class. *At the present time, we are the only substantial political Party of the working class.* It is one thing to correct wrong views and errors in the application of the concept of vanguard. It is quite another thing to reject the concept outright, to reduce its importance or to shelve it for future use.

The Party is a vanguard because it fights for socialism and educates the masses regarding the need for socialism on the basis of their own struggles and experiences. Without a vanguard party, the American workers cannot attain socialist consciousness since this does not come about spontaneously. To give up the Party, to reject or belittle its role as a vanguard means to lessen its capacity to organize and stimulate the workers to become a real independent political force in the country, to fight as class conscious people and eventually to advance to socialism. A vanguard working class party, important at all times, is especially necessary in the period of imperialism, when issues are complex and the struggles sharp, when great masses of all sections of the population are in motion, when the monopolists employ demagoguery, deception and repression on a large scale, and when the fight for peace, democracy, economic security and socialism assumes greatest importance.

There is a Communist Party in practically every country of the world where there is a working class. It is unthinkable that in the country of the strongest and most ruthless monopolists, the base of world reaction, the Communist Party—in existence 37 years with a long and honorable record of service to the American people—should be abandoned. That would be a serious setback for the cause of peace and democracy. It would hurt the fight for socialism throughout the world.

ON THE "NON-PARTY" ASSOCIATION

The argument is made that an "Association" is necessary because we have not been for many years a "political party in the American sense," and that we have not been an electoral party. This has been the false charge of reactionaries for years. This has been said of the Socialist Labor and Socialist Parties before us.

In the struggle for the political and economic needs of the working people, our Party has proved itself to be an *American* working class party a hundred times over. As is well-known, it has played an outstanding role in winning unemployment relief and insurance, in helping to organize the new trade union movement and its unity, in fighting for the rights of the Negro people, in the struggle for democratic rights and in combatting the dangers of war and fascism. We have also been an electoral party actively and effectively participating in elections. If the number of Communist candidates has been small in recent years, this is in part due to electoral restrictions applied to minority parties, to repression and to

the need for supporting coalition policies. Also, as a result of narrow sectarian third party policies on the one hand, and one-sided application of coalition policies on the other, we have often tended to efface the Party. While correctly supporting progressive candidates of other parties, we have too readily forgotten the necessity of keeping our Party and its program before the people, and of nominating candidates wherever this was possible. With the growing opportunities for restoring constitutional rights and legality, we shall again put forward candidates. Surely, if we become an "Association," we shall not improve our electoral work, or strengthen our constitutional right to the ballot. On the contrary, this action would lessen it.

An amorphous association would not improve mass work, but only retard it. Its members would lack a strong Party spirit and would tend more to be engulfed by their surroundings than to influence it with the spirit of the Party and its policies. The great strength of the Party is its unity of theory and practice. But an "Association" in the main would be a talking body: indecisive, vacillating, and a retreat from mass struggle.

The way to win better contact with the workers is not to change the form, but to change the way of work. The change of form would not make it easier for Communists in the shops and people's organizations. The Taft-Hartley Law is still in force against Communists. The McCarran Act is directed not only at the Communist Party as such, but at so-called Communist *Action* organizations, and against any militant bodies which the witchhunters choose to call "Communist fronts." Even the National Lawyers Guild is on the Subversive List of the Attorney General, and today in the South the NAACP is declared illegal.

To restore and extend our legal rights a political party has better constitutional claims than a nondescript non-party organization. The road to greater legality is built by struggle and close contact with the people, by better utilization of existing legal possibilities, by greater inner-democracy that mobilizes the Party members and non-Party groups, and by more resolute struggle for the Bill of Rights, including constitutional rights for the Party. *It cannot be won by concealment, retreat or change of form.*

ON THE UNITED SOCIALIST PARTY

It is correct to work for a "united Socialist party" as a future perspective, but it is wrong to turn the Party into an "association" in the false hope that such a change will facilitate the development of a united socialist party. It is wrong to reduce the Communist Party to a mere "transitional" organization whose "central duty" would be to propagandize for such a party. As pointed out in the Draft Resolution and in many articles, the conditions are not ripe for such a united Socialist party. Such a change could only divert us from the major task at present of strengthening and rebuilding the Communist Party. Only a strengthened Communist Party can carry on work and education for socialism among the working people *without whom there can be no worthwhile mass Socialist Party*. Only a stronger Party can help weld the unity of socialist-minded elements, on the basis of a united front, and clarify differences, without which no principled unity is possible. The attempt to make the formation of a united Socialist party an immediate goal, which in effect is what the proposal means, is only a defeatist attempt to leap over difficulties by projecting false, illusory prospects.

THE IDEA OF AN ASSOCIATION IS NOT NEW

The Party, under Browder's influence, changed into the Communist Political Association in 1944. Now the proposal is

for an association without even the name "Communist." It is said that the trouble with Browder's "association" was its concept of "progressive Capitalism." But that was not accidental. It was the fundamental idea underlying the change. The concept of "progressive Capitalism" envisaged a long and enduring period of class peace. Naturally, under such conditions there was no place for the Party and the struggle for Socialism.

The Browderist view of "progressive Capitalism" and class peace has been proved false. But, as happened in the period following World War I, reformist illusions have been awakened again in sections of our Party by the relatively long period of prosperity and employment, and by improved living standards for sections of the workers and middle class. Un-Marxist ideas are afloat about continued long-range, even permanent, prosperity. Doubts are expressed that an economic crisis in the USA is any longer inevitable. This despite the basic instability of Capitalism, the poverty of large sections of the people, the ever-mounting high cost of living, the large displacement of farmers from the land, the regions of chronic unemployment, the tens of billions of consumer installment debts, etc.

These reformist illusions have increased with sharp changes in the world situation signalized by the 20th Congress of the CPSU. This Congress correctly pointed out that we have entered upon a new era, which is now unfolding and in which it is possible to prevent war; a period in which it is possible to achieve long term coexistence and peaceful transition to socialism, and in which possibilities are developing for closing the historic split between Socialists and Communists. These are bright prospects for greater unity to advance the cause of peace, democracy and Socialism. They call for new tactics and new methods of work, for discarding sectarian and dogmatic outlooks and habits.

But they must not be interpreted in reformist ways. The Congress warned that these perspectives can be realized only through the sharpest mass struggle. This warning has been highlighted by the military invasion of Egypt and by the desperate efforts of counter-revolutionary forces aided by U.S. Imperialism to exploit the errors and weaknesses of Socialism and to restore Capitalism in Hungary. Imperialism still exists in a large part of the world, and we must not forget that monopoly capital is still powerful in the USA. As the draft resolution points out: "the trusts will continue 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."

Yet, in the discussions and in a number of articles this is forgotten. And once again there is daydreaming of the softening of the class struggle, and of a smooth ride to Socialism. These illusions nourish the views of replacing the Party with an Association. They express the influence of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas and pressures upon certain sections of our membership and upon some of our leaders.

Thus, the proposal to turn the Party into a "non-Party" Association is a leap backward. It is not a proposal for a different type of party, but one leading to its liquidation. The majority statement disagrees that its proposals are directed to dissolving the Party. Liquidation, however, does not consist merely of physical dissolution. Lenin, writing of the Party in his own country, said that liquidation is the attempt to "*liquidate the existing organization of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party and substitute for it an amorphous association within the limits of legality at all costs, even if this legality is attained at the price of an open renunciation of program, tactics and the traditions of the Party*" (Lenin, *Se-*

lected Works, Vol. 4, p. 151). This was written for Russia in 1908, but in our opinion its essence is applicable for us today.

SHOULD WE RETAIN THE NAME COMMUNIST?

The question of the name of our Party is not a principled question. Marxist-Leninist Parties have various names. However, to change the name of our Party at the present time could only cause confusion and disorientation, without gaining any practical advantage. Some think that it is necessary to change our name because of the grave errors and crimes of the Stalin era which hurt the cause of Socialism. It is necessary, of course, to dissociate ourselves from these acts and to explain that they are not inherent in Socialism. This has been and is being done. Also, it was the Soviet Communists themselves who revealed these serious distortions of socialist principles, and are correcting them.

The fact is that the Soviet Union, notwithstanding these errors, was and remains the foremost country of Socialism, the front rank fighter for peace and social advance. Its achievements have been truly remarkable. It is marching toward Communism. It was most responsible for saving world civilization from the curse of Hitlerism. By its example and aid it helped make one third of the world Socialist today—one billion people under Socialist governments.

The name "Communist," true, is an object of considerable prejudice as a result of the Big Lie and ruling class defamation. At the same time, however, the name "Communist" associates us with all that is new and vital in the achievement of human freedom and advancement on a world scale. Witness what is happening in China and the upsurge of the entire colonial world under the inspiration and often leadership of Communist Parties. Communism is a symbol of our credits and not of embarrassment, as expressed by some. It would be wrong, therefore, on account of the errors to take actions, such as change of name, which could be interpreted as hostility to the Soviet Union, or as a breaking of bonds with the ideology of Communism. There is great danger that the campaign to change the name of our Party at the present time is an expression of the determination of some to reject Leninism and downgrade Marxism as the theoretical and organizational principles of our Party.

ON DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

Point Two of the majority amendments deals with the question of Party organization. We agree with the first part of the amendment, but it does not follow that therefore we can and must, as the amendment concludes, "discard the concept of democratic centralism and monolithic unity as principles of our organization." This amendment by itself does not ensure the combination of democracy of decision and unity of action which is the essence of democratic centralism. It does not provide that dissenting minorities must abide by majority decisions while they are in effect. It says nothing of lower bodies abiding by the decisions of higher bodies, nor other essential features of a fighting Marxist-Leninist organization. After all, the old Socialist Party functioned through one national center and adopted common outlooks by majority decisions, but in practice, the state organizations were more or less independent. All varieties of Socialism prevailed, and there was little real democracy, and less discipline.

If democratic centralism were just a question of a term or a phrase, there would be no big issue. However, it represents principles of organization worked out by the world revolutionary movement over a period of 50 years. It is a system based on the views of Lenin and others concerning how to make a democratic, united, cohesive organization that can respond

effectively and readily as events require. The fact that the principles have been distorted or applied mechanically is not cause for discarding them, but for their better understanding and use. To drop the principle of democratic centralism is to open the door to bourgeois liberal and social democratic views, traditions and attitudes on organization.

Only parties based on Marxist-Leninist principles and forms of organization have led the working class in winning political power and in building Socialism in one-third of the world. Only such parties have given resolute leadership in the hard struggle against fascism, during the crucial years of the fight against Hitlerism in the largest part of the world, including the countries still under capitalist rule—France, Italy, England, and our own country. Only Marxism-Leninism, in principles and organization, enabled our Party heroically to withstand the monstrous attacks upon it and to survive as the only substantial Socialist organization. Also, we were able to maintain the best-trained forces, and render the necessary aid to maintain the "Daily Worker"—the only working class daily paper—during a period of 32 years.

Social Democratic Parties, on the other hand, rejecting Marxist principles and organization, have repeatedly failed to perform their role in the day-to-day struggle, often helping reaction in critical periods. They did not prepare the workers politically and ideologically to attain political power and abolish the private ownership of the decisive means of production. Though in power a number of times, in Germany, Austria, France, England, Belgium, etc., they failed to establish Socialism.

MARXIST-LENINIST PRINCIPLES CREATIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY APPLIED

There must therefore be no equivocation or doubt about the nature of the theory and principles which guide our movement. This is especially necessary in view of strong tendencies to regard Marxist-Leninist principles as no longer fully valid for our country in some of their basic teachings.

We are in agreement with much of what is said regarding Marxism-Leninism in the draft resolution, especially in relation to its dogmatic and doctrinaire application, and our failure to use our theory creatively and in accordance with conditions in our country. But there are formulations which leave in doubt where we stand on our doctrines. We must state clearly and without equivocation that the Communist Party bases itself on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, which are valid for all countries including the USA. These guiding principles, however, should not be looked upon as a dogma by the Party. They must be applied in accordance with the specific conditions in each country, differently, therefore, in one country than in another, differently in the USA than in the Soviet Union, differently in England than in France, etc. They must be further developed and enriched on the basis of our history, experience, traditions and in the light of ever-changing reality.

We believe confidently that the collective strength of our membership is capable, by their discussion, ideas, will and unity, of finding the road out of this crisis. We offer this statement as a contribution to the clarification of the problems that face us. We are heartened by many fine appraisals and proposals that have come from the membership in the discussion. We urge the free and fullest discussion with all views heard. We caution against close-mindedness to the opinions of others.

We are confident that, acting together in a spirit of unity and principle, we can find the correct resolution of our problems.