

On the Work and Consolidation of the Party*

By Bob Thompson

THE FEBRUARY MEETING of our National Committee was correct when it singled out the deepening economic crisis as the decisive feature of the American scene. In the four and a half months that have elapsed since then, the impact of this crisis on all facets of national life, and above all its ever-expanding consequences for the working people and youth, have taken clearer shape.

Already severe inroads have been made on the wage and living standards of the working class as a whole. Caught in the scissors of growing layoffs, virtual elimination of overtime pay and spreading part-time pay on the one hand, and rising living costs on the other, real take-home pay has been sharply reduced. Management efforts to intensify speed-up and break down work conditions have become general. At the same time there are several million families in which the breadwinner is totally without employment. Of these a large part, either ineligible for unemployment compensation or having exhausted their payments, have been reduced to a level near the despised relief stand-

ards of the '30's. In some predominantly Negro communities, which, as is always the case, have been hardest hit, this is beginning to approach a ratio of one out of every five families.

A new situation is being imposed on the trade-union movement. There are no longer so many crumbs on the negotiating table. The big corporations see in the crisis an opportunity for a union-busting spree. The situation in auto is a graphic illustration of this. Today defense of all unions against monopoly and governmental attacks takes on great importance and must be central in our Party's program. At the same time there is arising an imperative necessity for a clean-cut break with business unionism. The old philosophy, the old tactics, the old methods of leadership can no longer, under present changing conditions, produce results.

Objective conditions call for the rise of a new, militant unionism—a unionism that will work to pit the united strength of labor against the monopolies; that will work to organize the South; that will enlist the support of the Negro people, the youth, and of anti-monopoly allies

* Report to a meeting of the National Committee, CPUSA, June 28-29, 1958.

among farmers, professionals, and the middle class. The times demand a bold political perspective—a perspective of rapid, sweeping intervention of labor in national politics; of increasing direct representation in all legislative and executive bodies; of struggles to break the stranglehold of the machines in the two capitalist parties over national, state, and city politics; of a fundamental political realignment in the course of the period now opening up involving the emergence of a new People's Party in which labor plays a leading part.

It is a matter of great positive value that the working class still has within its living experience the memory of the major economic crisis which began in 1929. The impact of that crisis brought great rank-and-file pressures to bear on the union bureaucracy; it stimulated the emergence of a powerful Left current of which our Party was the heart; it created conditions which facilitated an alliance between this Left and forces seeking a middle course thereby breaking the dominance of the Green-Woll-Hutcheson conservative wing and making possible such historic advances as the organization of the unorganized and the formation of the CIO. On the political field also labor made significant advances, becoming a part, although all too subservient and non-independent a part, of a great majority coalition around Roosevelt which on some of the major issues confronting the nation and world, gave a progressive impetus. As a result,

while the crisis and depression-filled '30's were years of immense privation and hardship for the working people, the working class nevertheless emerged from them in a greatly strengthened position.

Today we have passed over the threshold into a new period of a serious cyclical economic crisis different in character from those that developed in 1949 and 1953. Basic class attitudes and relationships will be profoundly affected. How will the working class emerge from this crisis period? What will its status be in the nation? Will it emerge as a weakened, or even a defeated class? Or will it emerge with the status of a class that has taken long strides towards its rightful place as leader of the nation?

This large question is the center of our Party's concern as it drafts its program for the period ahead and shapes its labor policy.

The February meeting of our National Committee pledged that our Party, which has been without a defined labor policy for almost a year and a half, since its 16th convention, would at this June session be fully equipped with such a policy. This is the central and decisive task before this meeting.

Tomorrow a Draft Labor Policy statement will be presented for your consideration and action. This draft is in a large sense the product of three Party regional trade-union conferences held respectively on the West Coast, in the Mid-West and on the East Coast. It is estimated that

through these conferences, and through a series of additional meetings, a minimum of 200 comrades actively engaged in shop and union work participated in an organized way in shaping the estimates and policies that have gone into this draft. This is in its own right a modest, but by no means unimportant, accomplishment. Its impact on our Party has been to help establish a healthier outward orientation towards mass work and class problems and to put a damper on sterile factional bickering. It has had a stimulating effect on the activities of Party forces in a number of shops and unions. (I would add as an aside that the character of the discussions around this Draft Labor Policy statement should be some measure of reassurance to those sincere comrades who were fearful that a by-product of our February meeting might be the growth of undemocratic methods within our Party.)

When this National Committee meeting completes its work on it tomorrow, and adopts it, as I am confident it will, a landmark of great importance will have been passed in the rebuilding of our Party. Without a sound labor policy and tactical line, our Party doesn't amount to a hill of beans insofar as ability to influence the course of events is concerned. With such a policy and tactic, it can do a great deal even with its present reduced strength. What is more, the basis will exist for a rapid rebuilding of our Party's

strength and influence in the shops and locals.

The adoption of a National Labor Policy will at once confront this National Committee with additional tasks, and give the solution of these tasks a new urgency. Central among these is the developing of methods of work, and of a general leadership structure, that will guarantee a far higher level of sustained attention and direction to Party trade-union policies and activities.

Now if one examines what took place in the Garment general strike; what is happening in a number of areas in the auto, steel, packing-house and distributive industries; at the careful concentration activities in a number of other industries; then it is possible to find evidence of an improved situation with respect to some important phases of Party trade-union work.

In some areas this improvement is more visible. One of these is the manner in which our Party is reacting to the unemployment crisis. Our Party is beginning to speak out effectively on this issue in the *Worker*, through its national leaflets, through a number of excellent state and local leaflets and publications, and through an increasing number of mass meetings. In a number of important unions, and in some area-union conferences, Party forces as a part of a growing Left have been able to play a tangible and constructive part in the shaping of union programs and activities on the unemployment issue. Another such

area has been Party activities in the fight against anti-labor, so-called "right-to-work" legislation, particularly in California and Ohio.

All of this, and much more that could be added, is welcome evidence of the improving political health of our Party, the fact that it is overcoming the state of internal paralysis that fenced it off from workers and their problems and struggles.

We take note of these modest improvements in Party activity in the trade-union field, of this healthy trend, not for the purpose of manufacturing some basis for complacency. Lord knows one would have to look through a mighty powerful magnifying glass to find any such basis. Our purpose is the exact opposite. It is to establish the fact that these positive developments are being retarded because the national leadership has carried over from the recent past a lot of baggage with respect to methods of work.

This will not be changed overnight. Changing it will be a process. It need not, however, be a long-drawn-out process. In order to secure an improved caliber of Party leadership of our forces in the shops and unions, I suggest we undertake the following objectives in the period between this and our next N.C. meeting.

For the decisive heavy industry region surrounding the Great Lakes, a Party Co-ordinating Committee should be established. Operating under the N.E.C. its purpose will be to give sustained and on-the-spot assist-

ance to the State organizations in the region in the development of Party activity.

A network of three regional trade union commissions—mid-West, West Coast, and East Coast—shall be established to operate under the co-ordination and direction of the N.E.C.

The function of Labor Secretary will be undertaken by a competent comrade.

Questions of direct concern to comrades active in shops and unions must predominate in the agendas of all leading committees.

There must be an increase in the number—and I hope also the quality—of reports and articles elaborating Party policy on problems confronting the labor movement.

Comrades, if this National Committee meeting equips our Party with a strong and sound labor policy, and at the same time takes the necessary measures to strengthen the daily leadership of Party activities in this field, it will lay the basis for some very important advances in the coming months.

YOUTH

The economic crisis is confronting today's generation of youth for the first time with the most fundamental of all questions. This is the same question which in a different setting was paramount for the youth generation of the '30's. It is the question of whether or not they can find a place for themselves in the productive life of the nation. During the whole of their growing-up period,

today's youth have had dinned in their ears that they as individuals were assured such a place if only they would conform to the stereotype of a good American so largely drawn by the McCarthyites. They are now confronted with a situation where these answers don't ring true even on the surface. The basic pressures operating on the graduating classes this year are towards collective action, not individualism.

The problems they confront demand group struggle, not individual compliance. The questions they want answers to demand searching, social thought, not individual conformity. It is the corporations that have closed their doors to the youth. Youth must turn to labor to pry them open. It must turn to labor for initiating the formulation and enactment of youth legislation, going beyond the aid given by youth legislation of the New Deal period. The fully valid concept of a labor-youth alliance must be restored. Above all, youth must turn to itself, with the fullest support and assistance of all progressive working-class forces, to find the forms that will rapidly bring forth an organized Left in its ranks; and together with this the forms that will promote its unity as a progressive social force in the nation.

For some two or three years now it has been fashionable in our Party to bemoan the advancing age level of our membership. I think the time has come for us to stop moaning and to start doing something. If we start paying some really serious attention

to the youth and their problems, they in turn will pay attention to us.

What is possible for our Party to do here and now in this field?

The first thing that is possible for us to do is to keep clearly in mind a fundamental fact of life. This is that there is a tremendous gap—I am almost tempted to say chasm—in the life experience of class-conscious and Marxist workers of the age level of 35 years and over and the healthy, militant members of today's younger generation. They are products of two radically different social periods. The proposition put forth by Lenin that the old can never tell the young to tread in its footsteps is today true, doubled in spades.

The revisionist idea that our Party is an old and a senile Party is for the birds. Our Party is basically a Party of the youth, for its science deals with that which is new and growing in the social and political life of our country. There is a deep-going, rebellious, and pioneering spirit in this young generation of ours, and it is greater, not lesser, than that of past generations. A hundred years ago a Horace Greeley could undertake to give a geographical direction to this pioneering spirit of the youth with his battle cry: "Go West, young man, go West!" Today this pioneering spirit can be given no geographical direction. It must seek a political direction, it must pioneer social and political frontiers. To be a Horace Greeley in 1958 one must raise the battle-cry, "Go Marxist, young man, go Marxist!"

Our Party has a great role to play among today's youth. It has a vision of the future, a depth of class consciousness, a wealth of experience in the rough-and-tumble of class struggle, which the youth of this generation desperately need. It cannot fulfill this role if it sets out to preach to the youth. It cannot start out by telling young people, "Look, we did such and such in the past and you do so and so in the present." We must start out on a different basis. We must start out by listening to young people, by seriously undertaking to understand what is different in their life experience, by undertaking to assist, not boss.

Keeping this in mind, what is it possible for this National Committee to undertake between now and its next meeting in order to begin the development of a Party program and activity in the youth field?

To one degree or another, we can help see to it that the Marxist press and journals begin a systematic policy of carrying analytical articles and news stories dealing with problems and events of special concern to the youth.

We can begin the development of a conscious cadre policy towards young people in and around the Party. Let us give priority to listening to them and talking with them. Let us be as helpful as we can in stimulating and assisting in the formation of youth study circles that in one form or another will grapple with the content of Marxist-Leninist thought.

Let us become conscious of the fact that there already exists a wide

variety of youth groupings in which young Marxists play an important part. These range all the way from study groups and young explorer social clubs through chorus groups and bowling clubs. No Party club or section should be satisfied with its work unless it has a real connection with a grouping of young people of this character in its area. Perhaps in a year's time there will be 100 or 125 of such youth groupings throughout the country. Perhaps on the basis of their own experiences they will decide to convene a National Conference and establish a forward-looking socialist minded youth organization.

A number of young people, some in and some close to the Party, are already very active in attempting to shape Marxist policy in the youth field. Let us get together with these forces on an organized basis. Let us set our sights for a limited Party National Conference on Youth Policy for some time in September.

This meeting of our National Committee is, so to speak, starting from scratch with respect to a youth policy and program. It will take some time and experience before it can produce one. Let us make a start in this direction along the lines indicated. Youth has a way of asserting itself. If we oldsters take the hook off the latch, they will force the door open; and let us be secure in the knowledge that this door will lead forward, not backward.

THE NEGRO PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

The economic crisis is having a massive impact on the Negro peo-

ple's movement. Already there are signs of a fuller and more prominent participation in it of the Negro working class and of the more advanced and militant quality this will impart to it. The national reception given Paul Robeson's book is an expression of this. So also is the new status achieved by such great figures as Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois in the Negro community. It finds expression also in the new quality of the revolt that is taking place in Negro communities against the old-line political parties and machines. It was this that led to the victory of Turner in New Jersey. It was this that led to the massive revolt against the old-Party machines in Harlem around Powell, which is in effect a declaration of independence from the old party machines and carries great meaning for the Negro people's movement nationally and for the labor movement as well. The further impact of the crisis on the Negro people's movement will undoubtedly not only lead to a greater participation of working-class forces in its leadership, but will bring about a greater stress on those economic and political issues felt most pressing-ly by Negro workers, thus further advancing the character of this movement.

The Negro people's movement of today bears on it both the imprint of the special national oppression of the Negro people, and the imprint of being part of the rising tide of world-wide, anti-colonial and liberation struggles of the colored peoples.

Its path forward lies in alliance with the entire working class of our country. These special characteristics determine, however, that this alliance must be on a new basis of partnership and that the Negro component of this alliance will exert a new measure of initiative and trail-blazing.

Our Party needs a fresh theoretical appraisal of the status and path of development of the Negro people's movement. A serious beginning has been made on this. Comrade James Jackson has given a provisional report on this subject to the NEC and will lead a discussion on it at a National Negro Commission meeting in a few days. We should be prepared for a full-dress and definitive handling of this important question by the time of our next N.C. meeting.

In addition to resolving certain basic theoretical concepts pertaining to the status and course of development of the Negro's people's movement, there are a number of other problems that we must address ourselves to in the period between this and our next N.C. meeting.

Let us in a realistic and down-to-earth manner survey the adequacy of our Party's programmatic demands and activities, section by section, with respect to Negro working families, in the fields of job discrimination, unemployment compensation, welfare, and housing.

Let us undertake to guarantee that in every section of the labor movement in which Communists exert an in-

fluence there will be raised in the next six months in one form or another two demands:

- 1) The right of Negroes to register and vote in the Southern States, and
- 2) The need for a new initiative to expand unionism in the South.

Let us begin to assess the status of our Party in a few key areas such as Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, the South Side of Chicago, Cedar Central in Cleveland. What contacts do we have and what movements do we influence in these areas of Negro majority in the North?

POLITICAL ACTION

The effects of this economic crisis are particularly far-reaching, because, starting with the United States, it is rapidly becoming a crisis of the world capitalist system. In addition to imposing great hardship on the working people of all the developed capitalist countries, it is throwing into chaos the economies of those less developed countries that are dependent on a capitalist raw material market. It is developing at a moment when the socialist sector of the world is buoyantly moving from one economic success to another. The socialist sector is giving real aid on a vast scale to a growing number of countries. It has already surpassed the capitalist world in a number of areas of education, technology, and scientific advance. It has already surpassed large areas of the capitalist world in absolute standards of well-being for its people and is rapidly approaching the point where it will

compete on a per capita basis with the productivity of the most advanced capitalist nation, the United States. Under these circumstances, the outbreak of a serious economic crisis such as the present one carries implications for the future of world peace and of capitalism far different from the one of 1920.

In the '30's imperialism had a bigger say in the world. It could attempt the solution of its ills by launching a series of so-called little wars of aggression against relatively defenseless countries—China, Ethiopia, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia. It could bring fascism to power at those points where the working class most threatened it. It had the power to and ultimately did resort to World War.

This is a different period of world history. It is a period in which imperialism has lost much of its power to shape events. With respect to "little wars," the outcome of the attempted aggressions in Korea and in Indo-China, the Suez fiasco, and now the Algerian deadlock and the events in Lebanon, testify to this. The heroic struggles of the French working class led by its Communist Party, and of the French people, developed so well in the report of Comrade Dennis this morning, is proving that there is no easy road to power for fascism in this period. At the same time the growing strength of the socialist camp and above all of the Soviet Union makes the prospect of a third World War increasingly uninviting.

The impact of the crisis on certain imperialist forces in the United States will no doubt be to intensify efforts to find a war solution to their problems. It will not, however, increase their ability to find such a solution. On the contrary, the basic impact of the crisis will be to increase the tempo with which the relationship of forces on a world scale is changing in favor of peace and socialism. It will be to further impose the condition of peaceful co-existence on the imperialists as the framework within which the problems of the capitalist world must be met. Increasingly deprived of ability to impose a war solution, the monopolists are at the same time inherently incapable of a peaceful solution for that can be found only along anti-monopoly lines. It is this situation which poses before the working class the great democratic task of this period—the assumption of leadership in the fight for an anti-monopoly coalition capable of imposing on the monopolies a solution to the people's problems.

The 1958 elections have already become an important arena of struggle on many of the important issues confronting the people. There are clear indications that both labor and the Negro people's forces are participating more actively and more independently than has been true in recent years.

Labor's participation in the California primary campaign was an outstanding example of this. So also is the greatly increased number of direct labor candidates in Michigan

and throughout the Midwest. The revolt against both of the old Party machines that took place in Harlem around Powell is an important indication of the new moods that are arising among the Negro people.

Our Party is becoming more active in all of these situations. The presentation of a Party legislative program has been helpful in this. Of greatest importance is the fact that its electoral policy is taking clear shape nationally and in the various States.

Three propositions form the broad framework within which this policy is developed. These were stated by Arnold Johnson in his article on the 1958 elections in the June *Political Affairs*:

a) to do everything possible to influence the elections in the interests of the people.

b) to promote ever greater independence of labor and its allies and a broad people's coalition policy based on the workers, the Negro people, farmers, and all other democratic forces.

c) to bring forward the Party and its program, strengthen its influence and build it in the course of the campaign.

BUILD "THE WORKER"

The period since our February N.C. meeting saw the last desperate efforts of Gates and his revisionist cohorts to transform the Party crisis into a catastrophe. The key objective of this effort was to force the liquidation of *The Worker*, thus eliminating a national Marxist press in the

U.S. and clearing the road for their projected new Marxist publication and movement. In this effort they were ably assisted by the so-called ultra Left—by certain fanatical dogmatist factions who chose this moment to intensify their efforts to sabotage Party mass work and press-building efforts.

At this meeting of our N.C., it is possible to announce with assurance that this effort to eliminate a Marxist press in the U.S. has failed. It failed because our Party accepted the challenge and fought back as no other Party save a Communist Party can. There was one period where our New York Party raised \$20,000 in three weeks time to prevent the paper's collapse. Certain state organizations, such as Illinois, Minnesota and Michigan, responded with effective special efforts to build circulation. Some of the reviving morale and fighting spirit of our paper was expressed in the willingness of its staff to go four and five weeks without pay and the willingness of the comrades in the National Party Center to drop seven weeks behind in their wages so that the paper could survive.

This Party fight for *The Worker* has paid off. It has not missed coming out for a single issue. Despite drastic reductions in its staff, its quality has greatly improved. In relation to key problems confronting the working people it is displaying ability to develop sustained campaigns. It is developing the ability to effectively expound Marxist ideas

and to defend Communist policies and organization. It has expanded its total circulation by roughly 2,000 since our February meeting.

This meeting of our N.C. should also commend the staff of the *People's World*, the California Districts of our Party and our Washington and Oregon State organizations, for the successful fight they have put up to maintain and develop the *People's World*.

We can see a clear perspective ahead for establishing a growing circulation base and an expanding sale for *The Worker*. It will still take, though, a lot of hard work—an immense effort—to realize that perspective.

The current fund drive must be carried through to full success.

A district press apparatus must be organized in each state.

Above all, *The Worker* must begin to be used more fully in every phase of our Party's mass activities, in every campaign it mounts or participates in. *The Worker* is the chief direct contact between our Party and the masses, its chief instrument for overcoming isolation.

BUILD PARTY MORALE— ROUT REVISIONISM

We stand today on the threshold of a period of great change. It is this prospect of a fluid and changing period in American life that makes so imperative the rapid rebuilding and activization of our Party. This understanding of the vital and large role of our Party must permeate and

inspire our membership. It is the foundation upon which Party morale is built. It is the basis for Party consciousness, the highest expression of class consciousness.

Revisionist concepts have eaten deeply into this foundation. It is necessary that the damage be undone. This is especially the case because some of these concepts, which have in recent months been taking a beating on the American scene due to the harsh realities of life and an improving political climate in our Party, may be encouraged anew by the open banner of revisionism hoisted on the international scene by the Yugoslavs.

The fountain source among American Marxists of revisionist concepts of the role of our Party is a set of closely inter-related propositions put forth at various stages of the internal Party struggle by the Starobin-Fast-Gates-Clark cabal. These are:

1. Marxism is outdated and has lost its validity as the advanced science of the working class.
2. The Communist Party has become an obstacle to socialism and social progress.
3. What exists in the Soviet Union, China, and the other socialist lands is "something other than socialism."

This is revisionism in its crudest and most vulgar dress. Our Party has passed beyond the point where such concepts receive toleration, let alone are accorded legitimacy.

The problem is that revisionism has a rather extensive wardrobe. As

the political-theoretical health of our Party improves, the attire changes, it becomes more sophisticated and subtle.

The formula for such change runs somewhat as follows:

It is no longer possible to shout in strident tones as John Gates used to do that Marxism is outdated. All right, we recognize this. Let us then say the same thing in a different way. Let us say in sweet and gentle tones that Marxism is the greatest of all possible sciences in this greatest of all possible worlds, but that this of course does not mean that it has any universally valid principles, or that the 12-Party statement defining those principles is correct.

One no longer gets a hearing when one says that the Communist Party is an obstacle to the achievement of socialism and social progress. All right, let's put the idea differently. Let us say that the Communist Party is the most wonderful organization ever produced by this most wonderful of all possible countries and that the reason for this is that it can now eliminate itself by contributing to the formation of a new kind of organization, based on different principles.

It is no longer possible to say that the Soviet Union, China, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, North Korea and Vietnam are not building socialism. Well, this is really unfortunate. But let us not be downhearted. Let us say without hesitation that these are the most wonderful of all coun-

tries in this most wonderful of all worlds. But then let us add, that the main thing about these countries is that they persist in doing the wrong things, at the wrong times, in the wrong ways, and that this, of course, is the source of the war danger.

This does not, of course, exhaust the trappings of revisionism. Perhaps mention should be made of one other. I have in mind, for example, the oft-repeated proposition that now that we have a strong trade-union movement, we don't really need a Party because after all this trade-union movement itself is raising the necessary demands. "Why do we need a Party" it is said, "to demand 25 cents more than a union is demanding? Why do we need a Party to demand a thirty-hour week when many unions are demanding a 35-hour week?" This, of course, is a caricature of the role of our Party, a revisionist caricature.

Our Party's great function is not that of taking note of, and then adding to, immediate demands of the unions and other working-class bodies. Of course, there do arise situations where our Party in its own name raises immediate demands that go beyond those being put forward by other organizations. Such is the case today, for example, in the legislative field where our Party has raised and has undertaken to popularize demands with respect to the unemployed and the right to jobs that go beyond those coming from other quarters. This is a valuable and a useful thing and one aspect

of the role of the Party. It is not, however, the central function of our Party. The central function of our Party is that it is the only organization on the American scene which, on the basis of an advanced science, understands the totality of the workings of the capitalist system and of the relationship of classes within it. It is the only organization in a position to properly relate the present level and immediate demands of the working class and its allies with the historic and objectively determined goals of that class. It is the only organization because it is a *party of its class* which is in a position to give comprehensive direction and a broad orientation to the Left and progressive currents arising out of the immediate struggles of the period. Our Party is not a Party of one segment of the working class. It represents the interests of the whole class in its activities in all facets of national life, in its activities in relation to the trade-union movement, the Negro people's movement, the youth movement, the women's movement, in the electoral field. It brings into the working-class movement the scientific outlook of Marxism-Leninism, and imparts to the working class on the basis of its own experience and struggles a socialist consciousness.

Can our Party meet the large challenge posed by the period that lies ahead?

This meeting of our National Committee must give a qualitatively different answer to this question than has been forthcoming in the past. It

must do so on the basis of the general line of our 16th Convention and the decisions of our February N.C. meeting.

Often in recent months, I have heard George Blake proclaim his lack of confidence in our Party. Casting himself in the role of a political Hamlet and using to the full the prestige that goes with National Committee membership, he wandered on and off the stage of Party meetings proclaiming his inability to decide the question of whether this Communist Party of ours should or should not be. I have heard others who are still members of this National Committee perform in a like manner.

Now, Comrades, I say we must have done with this. I say the National Committee must put a stop to such goings on, must have done with them once and for all.

Confidence in the Communist Party and its future is nothing other than the highest political expression of confidence in the working class and its future. For a Marxist, there is no such thing as confidence in one without confidence in the other. If there are comrades here who hold a contrary view—who hold a view that it is possible for a Marxist to lose confidence in the Communist Party and still retain confidence in the working class—I ask that you put your views on the table at this meeting. Develop a thesis to this effect and we will debate it openly before the Party. I say no such thesis can be developed without abandoning

even the pretense of Marxism. I say further that the undermining of confidence in our Party and its role and the gutting of its working-class fighting spirit is the very essence of revisionism as it has developed on the American scene.

Now some may say we are trying to force confidence down the throats of members of this N.C., and that confidence is something that can't be forced on anyone. This National Committee can do little or nothing to force confidence in the Party and the working class on any of its members who may have lost that confidence. It can, however, do something else. It can, and in my opinion must, end the fiction that one can lose such confidence and still retain ability to give leadership to the Party and the working class. This meeting of our National Committee must re-establish beyond shadow of doubt, as its February meeting stressed, the basic Marxist concept that confidence in the future of the working class and of its Communist Party is the most fundamental of pre-requisites for real leadership of the Communist Party and of the working class. It must re-establish the concept that the function of leadership is to build up the morale and fighting heart of the organization, and that to undermine and destroy that confidence is a crime against the Party and the working class. Our Party has many real weaknesses. These weaknesses must be approached from the viewpoint of overcoming them, not exploiting them.

The improved political health of our Party and the beginnings that are being made in constructive mass activities provide a sound basis for confidence in our Party's future.

The chief disruptive phenomenon in our American Party during the recent past has been the rise of a powerful revisionist tendency and the achievement by it, for a period of time, of a status of semi-legitimacy in our ranks despite the struggle waged against it. It would be the gravest error, however, to conclude from this that somehow the deep-rooted danger posed by dogmatic and sectarian currents in our ranks which, like revisionism, have their base in objective conditions, has abated or lessened. On the contrary it has grown.

The fact is that revulsion against dogmatism, especially some of its most fanatical and extreme variants, has been a factor which influenced many staunch Party comrades who never agreed with the essence of Gates' revisionist views, towards becoming enmeshed in his grouping. Conversely, many staunch Party comrades, out of revulsion against the rampant revisionism of the Gates forces, and at inadequacy in the Party's struggles against this revisionism, have tended towards dogmatism, and in some instances have even become enmeshed in fanatical factional groupings.

What is the political face of dogmatism in our Party today? Ideologically and politically, what does it stand for? In essence it repre-

sents an effort to revert back to a pre-7th Congress, pre-1935, class against class, programmatic position. It would have our Party ignore the great changes wrought by an epoch of socialist victories and great class and people's struggles. It would ignore the phenomenon of the rise and existence of the threat of fascism and of the consequent necessity of the working class pursuing a line of popular and people's front alliances. It would ignore the new world role of the Soviet Union and of the vast changes in relationships of forces on a world scale and in individual countries which open up new forms and possibilities for social progress and advance towards socialism. It would ignore the important changes that have occurred as a result of the growth of the unions and the Negro people's movement in our country.

These factional groupings of dogmatists have been flooding our Party with tracts on the Negro question, the trade union question, the peace question, etc. Examine what is said in them and you will find that the central theme of everything they say is that the be-all and the end-all of revolutionary policy today is the reverting to the pre-7th Congress class against class line. This is not a policy for our Party or our class. It is not Marxism. It is political and ideological bankruptcy.

This underscores the validity of the way the February N.C. meeting placed the need for a two-front struggle against revisionism and dogmatism. The resolution states:

While vigorously opposing and consistently striving to overcome sectarianism and doctrinairism, we must also relentlessly combat the ideas and positions of revisionism. Without a decisive repudiation and defeat of the revisionist trend in our ranks, we cannot carry on a systematic and effective struggle against Left-sectarianism and dogmatism which have plagued us for decades and with which we are at present so deeply afflicted, and we cannot build our Party as a Marxist organization and surmount our isolation. It is in this sense, and in the spirit of our convention and its injunction to work to end our isolation that, in the words of the convention Resolution, "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." This will, of course, vary from one situation to another. Moreover, this struggle should be waged so as to help overcome the historic weakness of the American Marxist movement—its sectarianism and doctrinairism.

END FACTIONALISM— HALT PARTY WRECKING

The February meeting of our National Committee laid the basis for the breaking up of old alignments in our Party. This is the process that has been taking place. A new, a decisive, and a growing majority has emerged in our National leadership in most of our State organizations. This new majority has the adherence of staunch Party comrades associated with all past Party trends.

Its political solidity is founded on the explicit and unequivocal conviction that this Communist Party of ours has a vital and growing role to play in current struggles and that its future and the future of its science, Marxism-Leninism—is in the historic sense synonymous with the future of our class and country. It is a majority willing to fight for our Party against all attackers.

What has happened to these erstwhile leaders who continue today to adhere to the revisionist ideas associated with Gates? Many scarcely bother any more to appear at meetings and expound their bankrupt views. They have entered a new stage in their degeneration. They devote themselves to attempting to organize *coups* such as the public resignation of the California 26. They devote themselves to trying to demoralize individual members, clubs or sections. They plant scandalous lying stories in the capitalist press. This handful has entered into and is now engaged in Party wrecking.

What has happened to the hard core of dogmatic factionalists? For all practical purposes they have joined hands with the revisionist Party wreckers. They sabotage all Party activities and mass work. They refuse to support *The Worker*. They proclaim a policy of no-confidence in our Party and its future. They attempt to organize themselves and conduct themselves as a Party within a Party.

There was a time when Gates and Clark and Fast *et al*; were running

rampant, when our Party couldn't do much to defend itself against factionalism. Well, that day is past. Our Party is in the process of regaining its solidity as a Marxist-Leninist organization. This process has reached a point where it has the capacity to declare war on factionalism no matter what direction of the political compass that factionalism comes from—whether from the direction of revisionism or the direction of dogmatism.

The N.E.C. of our Party presented a line on this question of factionalism which was contained in the thesis of the interview I gave to *The Worker* on April 13. Between this and our next N.C. meeting practical measures should be undertaken to carry this line into effect. Let us undertake to move against and eliminate all significant factional groupings and all dual centers of leadership during this period.

LET US BE GARDENERS— NOT UNDERTAKERS

Let us at this N.C. meeting take a fresh look at our Party—at the direction in which it is moving—at its mass activities and at its inner life.

I would urge that we do so not from the viewpoint of the undertaker surveying his neighborhood for business prospects. Let us not be too obsessed with those negative things

which still exist, but which are in essence the carry-overs of a past period, and which are in the process of elimination and death.

I would urge rather that we adopt the viewpoint of the gardener. Let us consciously undertake to search out and pinpoint the new, the healthy, the productive things in our Party. Let us stimulate those trends so that in the shortest order they become the predominant characteristics of our Party in all phases of its work.

The most important part of the picture of our Party's current activities and status will come in the discussion. It will come from comrades in districts, and shops, and sections, who in life are putting an end to a period of sterile internal dissension in Party affairs and are helping the Party in their areas to grapple with the real problems confronting the working people of their shop and community.

This is a period in which the need for our Party is becoming increasingly manifest. Objective conditions are favorable for a rapid rebuilding of our Party's influence and strength. At the same time our Party's political health has improved to the point where it has a real capacity to take advantage of the new possibilities opened up by this objective situation. I think confidence that we are going to move forward from this N.C. meeting into a period of Party growth is fully justified.