

16th NATIONAL CONVENTION Discussion Bulletin

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FOR CREATIVE MARXISM APPLIED TO OUR COUNTRY

By WILLIAM
SCHNEIDERMAN

There is a crisis in the party, and it would be folly to minimize how serious it is. Fundamental concepts have been shaken and uprooted, and it is understandable why a weakening of confidence in the party, and uncertainty as to its ability to change, should be so widespread among the membership. We must make some basic and sweeping changes at our convention, if the party is to survive as more than a sect. Our mistakes were not simply those of tactics or political estimates. We must go deeper than that. Our sectarianism goes back to a dogmatic interpretation of our theory, characteristic of our party from its inception. We are now reviewing many fundamental theoretical concepts which we had formerly treated as though they were fixed for all time. The



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most important thing that is happening in the world Communist movement today is that each party is seeking to break with dogmatism, and applying Marxism-Leninism in a creative way to their own country. Where they are moving too slowly in that direction, they are courting disaster. The creative contributions to Marxism-Leninism which are being made in many Communist Parties since the 20th Congress were once regarded as "heresy." It is all the more regrettable, I think, that Comrade Foster should cry "heresy" at this time, at the propositions put forth by the National Committee in the party discussion.

To me, the question as to whether we call ourselves Marxist, or Marxist-Leninist, is largely a war of words. I think we should base ourselves on those principles of Marx and Lenin which are universally valid, and distinguish them from those which were valid for a certain period or in different historical circumstances, but not necessarily valid for our country today. We should also not be afraid to say that some concepts which we formerly regarded as immutable principles were never valid for America.

We should declare our independence of any reliance on the Marxists of other countries to determine our path for us. While we do not rate very high as masters of Marxist theory, only American Marxists can in the final analysis chart the American road to Socialism. This does not deny that we can learn from the rich experience of the international workingclass movement

But we must above all base ourselves on American conditions, history, and traditions.

SOLIDARITY AND PATRIOTISM

I think we can adhere to the principle of international workingclass solidarity without negating patriotism and concern for the national interests of our own country's people. And perhaps we can learn from the bitter and tragic experience of other parties in this regard.

We should regard ourselves as an American Marxist party which strives to win support for its socialist outlook by participation in the political struggles of the day, and by ideological struggle, that is, in the battle to win men's minds through the many democratic channels which exist on the American scene. It must retain its workingclass character and outlook as a part of action, but must place greater stress than we have on developing forms of mass education on what Socialism means for America. By this I do not mean that we should become a socialist debating society. There may be a limited part which other socialist groupings can play, who conceive of themselves in that role, but they cannot take the place of a Marxist workingclass party.

We must become a truly democratic party, which will require a sharp break with past principles of organization. No policy should be made without full debate, including consideration of opposing views or alternatives. The right of dissent should not be closed after decisions are reached. Policies should be reviewed, and if necessary reconsidered, after being tested in practice. But we must devise some way whereby discussion does not become aimless and unduly protracted, and the events we are discussing have not passed us by before we have arrived at any conclusions. If we are to be a party of action, participating in the great battles of the day, we must have a system of organization which, while guaranteeing the fullest democratic practice, also results in unity of action when the majority has decided.

ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

I would not favor changing to a political association or changing our name at this time. I do not think it would begin to solve our problems in connection with our fight for legality, at least at this stage of the fight. We may be forced to make some changes, sooner or later, which will help us win the right of a Marxist party to a legal existence, and when that becomes necessary, changes in form or name are not a matter of principle. Under those circumstances, I believe such changes would be understood and accepted by the bulk of our membership, as well as outside the party, but this is not the case today.

If the reasons advanced for a political association are other than those of legality, then I believe they are likewise not warranted. Changes in form or name would only be justified if they reflected changes in our function and role in an entirely different situation, for example, if we were one Marxist grouping within a much broader socialist movement. Under present circumstances, such changes might feed tendencies toward liquidation of the party, which we must fight against.

About This Bulletin

This bulletin will appear every two weeks until the national convention in February. We urge members of the Communist Party to write articles and letters giving their views in the Party discussion. It should be borne in mind that this phase of the pre-convention discussion is based on the draft resolution issued by the National Committee.

The deadline for articles for each issue is two weeks before publication date. If at all possible, manuscripts should be typed (double space). Maximum length for articles will be 2,500 words, though the shorter the better. Every effort will be made to have each issue present varying points of view, cover a variety of topics and represent different parts of the country.

Articles must receive some identification. They must be sent through district offices with an accompanying note from the district (or from the section in cases where the sections are far from the district headquarters).

Copies of resolutions adopted by clubs, sections, districts, etc. should be sent in the same way as articles. Many of these will be printed. Suggested amendments to the draft resolution should likewise be sent to the Discussion Committee. These too will be printed when of general interest.

Address all mail and material to Discussion Committee, 101 W. 16th St., New York 11, N.Y.

LOOSE SLOGAN

I think we should be frank in admitting, however, that the tendency toward liquidation of the party was strengthened by the loose way in which we have been tossing around the slogan of a "mass party of socialism." This slogan gives a false picture that there is some short-cut to get out of the dilemma we are in. It would be a dangerous illusion to see in this slogan, at this time, more than a hope for the future. The changes we must make in our party will help pave the way for it, but they will not bring overnight such a mass party. We cannot realistically regard the objective situation in the country today, nor the status of the socialist-minded movement here, without realizing that a mass party of socialism can only be a long-range perspective. Certainly it cannot be realized by our merging with socialist-minded groups that are far weaker, more sectarian, and even more divorced from the American workingclass than we are.

There are many questions that none of us can answer at this time. I doubt that our convention will answer all of them. But of one thing I am sure. If we do not take a big step in breaking with the past in our dogmatic interpretation and application of Marxist theory, in our system of organization and leadership, and in our practices, our party cannot survive as an effective force on the American scene. And I am deeply perturbed by Comrade Foster's arguments, not as to the validity of one or another of his statements or criticisms, but because I think that the main weight of his position in the present party discussion is being thrown against any real change, and against any guarantees that we will not make the same mistakes all over again. I do not see in his position any real fight to break with dogmatism; on the contrary, his charges that the National Committee is "abandoning Marxism-Leninism" sounds to me like a pre-occupation with stick-

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THE DRAFT RESOLUTION AND OUR PRESENT PROBLEMS

By SID STEIN

In presenting the draft resolution for discussion those of us who voted for it did not consider that this draft was the final word on the many questions it deals with. The discussion that has developed so far has been characterized by free expression of opinions, deep and uninhibited criticism and thoughtful proposals for changes. The most important feature of the discussion is not only its content but fully as important is its method. Unlike all previous discussion of our recent past including the discussion preceding the 1944 and 1946 conventions we are now engaged in a genuine airing of differences on basic questions of policy. There are no "Sacred Cows" in this debate. All propositions, no matter who advances them or whatever their content, must run the gauntlet of critical examination by the membership of our Party. If we retain this method of discussion and debate in the future, we will have broken with one of the most harmful features of our past and established the most important guarantee for the eventual re-emergence of our Party as an important and growing force in the working class movement of our country. If we fail in this, no matter how good our final Resolution, no matter what changes we make at the coming convention, we will deteriorate into an insignificant sect.

PLANNING ABSENT

It has to be recognized that the character of the present discussion did not come about as a result of deliberate planning and encouragement by the National Committee. It did not come into being as a result of initiative on our part to place before the membership the full scope of the crisis that faced our organization and to state our opinions as to what conclusions must be drawn and what deep-going changes must be made by the Party in order to overcome the crisis. It was our failure to give leadership in the discussion as it developed in the spring and early summer that accounted for a period of "spontaneous combustion." As a result the positive aspects of the discussion were marred by increasing moods of pessimism and even of demoralization. We of the National Committee bear a heavy responsibility for this situation.

The attitude to the draft resolution which was adopted by the National Committee was also conditioned by these preceding events. Many comrades were in no mood to dispassionately examine its content but measured it against the background of the past failures of the leadership.

The Draft Resolution should be measured by whether it meets the problems that created the present deep-going crisis in our Party.

Prior to the 20th Congress our Party began to analyze the reasons for the heavy losses we suffered from the beginning of the cold war through the years of repression.

The Khrushchev speech at the 20th Congress introduced a new and decisive element into the discussion. The disclosure that the C.P.S.U. under the leadership of Stalin was responsible

for gross violations of Socialist democracy and for policies that ran counter to some of the basic principles and objectives of scientific Socialism, shocked our Party membership and leadership.

This shock could not but lead individual Party members and leaders, as well as the Party as a whole, to a most searching re-evaluation of our policies.

For the first time since our birth as a Party, the re-evaluation broke through the bounds of inhibitions. The idea that we can re-evaluate only in the framework of what is acceptable to Marxists in the Soviet Union was at last shattered. At least for the majority of our membership and leadership.

The very shock that intensified the crisis in the Party simultaneously brought with it the main ingredient for the solution of the crisis—recognition of the basic sources of long-standing errors which are the main rea-



SID STEIN

sons for the heavy defeats we suffered, for our isolation from the mainstream of American life and for the grave crisis our Party is in today.

The Resolution states in clear-cut if abbreviated form the main sources of our errors in the following paragraph:

"The roots of these errors are not to be found in the events of the past ten years alone.

"The Marxist movement in our country has suffered historically from dogmatic application of Marxist theory to the American scene. The Communist Party inherited these weaknesses. Insufficient development of the independent theoretical work of our Party over the past decades has contributed towards our doctrinaire acceptance and mechanical application of many theoretical propositions.

"Our Party has also suffered from an oversimplified approach to and an uncritical acceptance of many views of Marxists and Marxist parties in other countries.

"Doctrinaire forms of party organization, bureaucratic methods of leadership, failure to develop inner party democracy and a frequently intolerant attitude to the people we worked with have been in large measure responsible for our inability to correct mistakes in time as well as for much of our sectarianism. All these factors are interrelated; each helped to reinforce the other."

If the Resolution did nothing else, an elaboration of these basic questions would be a decisive beginning in dealing with the main problem before us. It seems to me that this section needs to be placed in the most

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NEEDED: STILL NEWER LOOK AT WOMEN'S PROBLEMS

By E. R. R.

MINNESOTA.

When Elizabeth Lawson's controversial article on women drew some heated and often deeply perceptive responses, attention was focused briefly on the special problems women face as a group. But since the furore died down, nothing further has been said about strengthening our basic approach to women. "Strengthening" is actually a mild word. When there is no discussion at all in a pamphlet like Comrade Dennis' "New Look" we have to take a still newer look and begin to build a strong, realistic program that can appeal to the masses of American women and at least point the way to the solution of their problems.

What is the woman question today, and how important is it? For one thing, women constitute a majority of the voters, and past experience shows that women have a special approach to elections. In the 1952 Presidential election they voted on the basis of peace, and the GOP is trying to repeat its appeal this time in spite of the intervening "brink of war" years. Both Democratic and Republican candidates campaign consciously for the women's vote, and the AFL-CIO has asserted the need to win women as a group to labor's election program.

In the face of this, how is it that our party closes its eyes to the special political power that women have as a group? This is more than just a tactical question. Women act as a political grouping because of their special basic role in society. They are united in their responsibility for their families and the problems arising from this, their main job. They are also united through the patterns of a male supremacist society, and they are largely conscious of at least the symptoms of their oppression, even if they have not carried through a full analysis of it as something inherent in the nature of capitalism.

A quick look at women's magazines will show how high is the general consciousness of women's problems. But the working class not taken part in the discussions now going on in the press. And the Communist Party has failed to make its unique contribution. As Marxists we could give women a real hope for achieving political expression, economic rights, social equality and personal dignity. It is our responsibility at least to

begin to formulate a program which can do this.

AN IMMEDIATE PROGRAM

An immediate program must take into consideration women's vital concern with several kinds of problems.

1.—War or peace: The threat of war the draft and its harmful effects on the youth; the physical menace of militarization where a training jet can plough into a row of homes and kill children at play; the dangers of H-bomb tests now and for future generations; the emotional effect of bomb drills in the schools which still send some children home hysterical with fear. These are all problems of immediate concern to women as wives and mothers, and these are the terms into which foreign policy and disarmament can be translated.

2.—Social and community problems: The schools, public health, recreational facilities, juvenile delinquency are certainly everyone's concern. But they form a core around which women traditionally rally in specific campaigns as well as in their organizational programs. Interest and activity are there. We need a conscious, workingclass program to heighten activity, to unify the women already involved in these struggles and to focus attention on the real sources of the problems.

3.—Working women have a special group of problems. Working is not the chosen goal of the average woman today. She works because she has to, and the least she can ask is a decent day's pay. Instead, she finds that she is paid less than a man on the same job. She has less chance to learn new skills, or get hired in higher-paid categories. She is penalized if her responsibility as a mother keeps her off work occasionally when a child is sick. She has to face the worry that her children may not have proper



care while she works, or she may have to pay a large part of her wage for child care. An immediate program for working women must include the demand for equal pay for equal work; passage of state minimum wage laws to protect the lowest-paid women workers in laundries, restaurant work and other intrastate industries; child care centers and public nursery school programs. And last but not least, there is a crying need for a real campaign to organize the unorganized women workers, and to integrate them in union activity and leadership where they are organized.

4.—The vital role of women in drawn-out strikes shows without question that the wives of workers are an integral part of the working class. And yet auxiliaries are not permanent, strong, political, economic and educational organizations. This means that the political education of a woman usually begins during a crisis instead of before it. Can COPE really be built as a family organization? Can auxiliaries be strengthened? Our help in this direction would help draw women closer to trade union struggles.

Now, these things have all been said before. But there is a difference between writing out "minimum programs" on paper and establishing a principled and practical approach to see that such a program can be realized. And certainly our party will not be in much of a position to help bring to life such a program if women's problems are not even mentioned in basic discussions of policy.

WOMEN AND SOCIALISM

What does socialism really mean for women? We have a

traditional policy that women can be fully emancipated only under socialism, and that even partial equality can be achieved only when women enter into production and household drudgery is industrialized.

Well, tell this to an average woman as our Party policy and she will look blankly at you. She doesn't want to wait for the millennium for the relief of some her oppressive problems. Neither does she see "entering production" as any special blessing when it would simply mean adding to her already heavy burdens the back-breaking speed-up, low pay and terrible conditions of a present day factory. And finally, she will resent anyone telling her she should eat in restaurants, send her clothes out to be laundered and mended, eat bought baked goods—when all these services are usually inferior to her home made variety and are certainly always more expensive than she can afford today. It's just pie-in-the-sky to say that under socialism all these things will be different. We must speak in terms of today's experiences.

This is where we can really ring a bell. Speak of socialism in terms of more and better schools, free higher education. Speak of free medical services, free hospitals, free drugs. Speak of wages that haven't had the profits cut out of them, so that they can be large enough to buy the kind of food, clothing, homes, household equipment, cars our country is capable of producing. Speak of year-round full employment.

Yes, we should speak too of the right to work for all women—but not of any obligation to work. The right to work is essential if women are to win equality. But the choice of whether or not to work must be up to the individual, to be made under neither economic pressure nor legal compulsion.

Inequality of women is inherent in our capitalist society. But equality does not automatically come with socialism and or the right to work. Equality is a complex social, economic, political and psychological problem. It must be set as a special goal the achievement of which will be made possible by the conditions of socialism.

WOMEN IN OUR PARTY

We have been guilty of serious weakness on this score. We have outlined general objectives for our women in mass work, but we have not developed a program which is well balanced and realistically thought through. We have not developed a theoretical approach which would equip our women for work among women. And finally, we have not had a cadre policy of developing our women comrades to take their rightful place in

the leadership of the Party.

These weaknesses can be corrected—again, on paper—by drawing up a set of principles and saying "so be it." But we are living in a society and culture of which male supremacy is an integral part. And certainly membership in the Party does not insure immunity. I feel that it is necessary to carry on a conscious campaign against male supremacy within the party, if we are to insure that we will make a real contribution to the struggle for women's rights in our society as a whole.

ON MALE SUPREMACY

A "campaign against male supremacy" does not mean the appointment of a Committee to Hear Complaints of Male Supremacy. It means carrying out an ideological struggle in the most basic sense—the analysis of the role of women in society, analysis of the relationship between men and women, an educational program to correct errors in our comrades' thinking—and yes, in their personal conduct too, though this is only one aspect of the problem. I certainly think a special committee or Women's Commission is necessary, at least for a while, to see that this work is not lost in the shuffle; to prepare educational material; to make programmatic proposals; to keep reminding us of this great responsibility we have to our own women and to all women; and to analyze our work and check up to see that we fulfill our responsibility.

We do have something special to offer women, a world of promise in which they will be able to look on themselves with dignity and self-confidence. Can we find the way to make our offer so that it will be grasped eagerly and fruitfully?



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For Creative Marxism Applied to Our Country

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ing to the letter of Marxism-Leninism rather than its essence, and such a pre-occupation can only lead us back to dogmatism.

I support the Draft Resolution of the National Committee, as a beginning in the direction we have to move. I am not satisfied with many parts of it, and I have heard many justified criticisms of it. But I think we should not lose sight of the fact that the last section of the resolution, on the Party, does reflect in some measure the kind of changes widely demanded in the course of the party discussion. I wouldn't defend to the death every formulation in it; certainly some of them are highly debatable, and can be changed at the convention. But this does not warrant the wholesale condemnation of the resolution,

which some comrades are engaging in. And it does not justify the charges of "Right-Wing" and "Browderism," made by Comrade Foster, which violate the spirit of a democratic discussion.

The crisis in the party was caused by mistakes we all share in. It was aggravated by the failure of the leading members of the National Committee to speak out earlier in the discussion, and to speak plainly. Perhaps this was due in part to the fact that it took time for opinions to crystallize. But it was also due to the fact that the leadership has not been in the habit of taking membership into its confidence, and old habits die hard.

It is only now, in the final weeks of the discussion period before the convention, that we

are beginning to come to grips with the essential questions that must be resolved by the convention, and the only assurance we have that they will be resolved is that the issues will be placed squarely before the whole party membership.

The unprecedented world situation we are in presents the greatest challenge to our party and the world Communist movement. Whatever our failures up to now, they were caused by the fact that we have not applied Marxism in a creative way to our own country. In this sense, Marxism has had no real test in America. The challenge we face is whether we can become a party of creative Marxism. I don't think that any of us can answer that for sure, but I think we have the creative forces in our party to make a beginning in that direction.

THE PATH TO RE-BORN CONFIDENCE

By BILL NORMAN

The Draft Resolution embodies the basic principles and theoretical concepts necessary to guide our party for the period ahead.

Yet, while in its main outline moving in the right direction, the Resolution is nevertheless ONLY a beginning. The document is far from perfect in respect to those aspects of the document towards which a more or less definitive approach has been indicated.

Irrespective of the important contributions made by Comrade Foster to the labor and socialist movement of this country, and they have been many, I believe that if his present views prevailed it would doom our Party to impotence. From a social, political point of view, they can be characterized as moving backward. In the context of the new historical epoch today, they would actually move the clock of history backwards, by renouncing every move towards independence as an American Marxist Party as containing anti-Soviet overtones; by denouncing every move to mold the character of our Party in American tradition, as being a departure from the principles of Marx and Lenin; by denying the right and ability of American Marxists, independently and in consonance with the international Marxist movement to achieve creative Marxism. In essence, such views counsel spontaneity to "justify" our past fundamentally incorrect line and the crisis in our Party, asserting that time and new objective conditions will "prove" that we are exaggerating our



BILL NORMAN

mistakes and errors.

DENNIS' POSITION

Nor, in relation to the Resolution, can we adopt a position of compromise and vacillation exemplified by Comrade Dennis. The theory of so much and no further, far from helping to resolve our theoretical and organizational crisis, would only contribute to sinking us deeper into crisis, and how much deeper can we sink?

It is clear that there is far from complete unanimity of approach even on some basic propositions stated in the Resolution. Often there is a difference in the interpretation of what appears to be a common view. This is more a question of carrying out the spirit as well as the letter of the Resolution, of tactics.

For instance, there may be full agreement on the need for "equality and independence of Marxist parties . . . to engage in comradely criticism . . . whenever . . . necessary" and with the formulation of this need. Yet in the process of applying this concept concretely to a given

situation, there are various shadings of differences, various attempts to water down the newly-developed independence of the American Communist Party, epitomized, in my opinion, by Comrade Dennis and as expressed in his approach to the Krushchev revelations, and to the developments in Poland and Hungary, among other things.

ONLY ONE HOPE

There is only one hope for our Party and that is to unleash its total Marxist creativeness. That is often characterized as a departure from principles of Marx, Engels and Lenin. It is also described as being enamored with a new-fashioned sickness for change. In my opinion, such impatience with and contempt for change, for "going further," for unleashing instead of foreclosing the discussion and confining it to its very good beginning, can only serve to put our Party into a deeper rut, to throw it back from the path of creative Marxism begun by the Resolution, to dampen beyond relieve the confidence of our membership to whom the new perspectives charted by the Resolution constitute only a good beginning.

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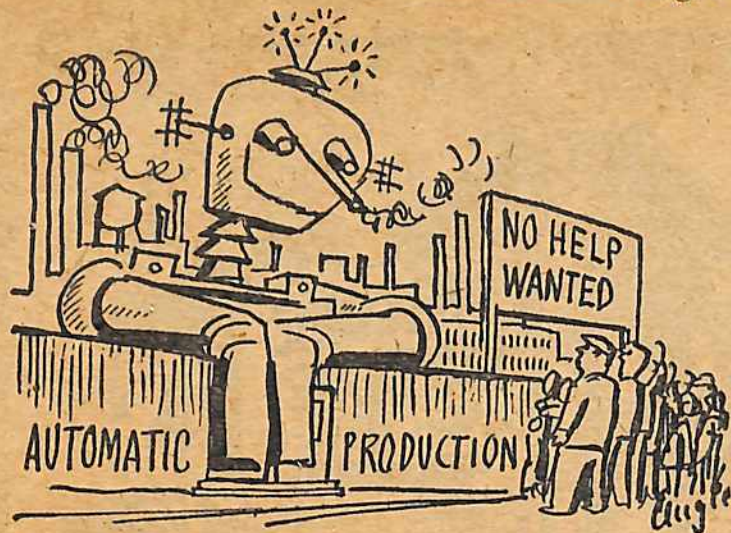
What are the basic principles and theoretical concepts that merit support of the Resolution as a good beginning?

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It has been held that there is nothing fundamentally new in the outlook for an anti-monopoly coalition and government as part of a two-stage transition to Socialism. In fact, it has been described as old-hat. Yet, nothing could be further from the truth.

There are decisive differences between our unrealistic aims of 1948 and 1949 and our realistic course today.

In the first place, the coalition we envisaged in the 1948 period



was not only an anti-monopoly coalition but an anti-imperialist coalition as well. While we argued against the idea that this constituted an anti-capitalist coalition, it in fact came close to being so.

Secondly, the projected coalition was incorrectly rooted in an overestimation of the radicalization of the working class.

Thirdly, we viewed the coalition of the 1948 period as a tactic, not as a strategic aim. This constituted a skipping of stages. It viewed the 1948 tactic as being simultaneously possible of immediate achievement as well as being next door to the transition to Socialism.

On the other hand the anti-monopoly coalition envisaged in the Resolution as a strategic aim on the road to Socialism bases itself on a more or less prolonged long termed struggle to win the working class and allies to this path. Too, once an anti-monopoly coalition and government is created it also envisages a more or less prolonged struggle to again win the working class and its allies for the transition to the next strategic phase, that of Socialism.

The tactic of the 1948-1949 period was, in reality, inconsistent with our professed line of the possibility of the peaceful, constitutional path to Socialism.

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Nor, some say, is there anything new in the concept of the

possibility of the peaceful, constitutional path to Socialism.

The significant question is why was this concept not adopted as the Party position at the 1950 Convention? There are, in my opinion, a number of reasons for this phenomenon.

Firstly, there was a lack of consistent clarity on the possibility of the realization of this concept in the National Committee and throughout the Party.

By polemizing, in this period, against the theory of "growing over," against which Marxists inveighed, in the past, under different historical conditions; by refusing to recognize that this theory was no longer a bone of contention between Communists and other socialist-minded people; we tended to cast doubt on the concept of the possibility of peaceful transition which we ourselves had projected.

Likewise, Comrade Foster tended to pose peaceful transition in a setting when American imperialism was still relatively powerful rather than under circumstances where its strength will have become considerably more weakened as a result of a new world relationship of forces; in a setting where peaceful transition would occur in the United States, not among the last but among the first of the capitalist countries.

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REJECT THE GATES POLITICAL ACTION ASS'N

(Speech by William Z. Foster, Nov. 11, 1956).

The International Communist movement now confronts serious internal difficulties, dramatized by the developments in Poland and Hungary. It is essentially a crisis of growth. Following the world-shaking victory of the Hitler forces during World War II, the great Chinese People's Revolution, the birth of the European People's Democracies, the wide extension of trade unions and other people's organizations and the defeat of the atomic war drive of American imperialism for world conquest, the world Communist movement is now making elementary adjustments to meet the new world situation. Especially, it is freeing itself from the harmful effects of the Stalin cult of the individual, which grew up during decades of super-centralization and rigid discipline of the respective Communist parties and Socialist countries. That very serious

errors are accompanying this process is all too evident from the tragedy in Hungary, which I shall not attempt to discuss at this time. The changes in the Communist parties involve the development of new international relationships among the Communist parties and Socialist governments, more democracy and less bureaucracy in the respective Communist parties, and a general review of Communist theory so as to eliminate harmful practices of dogmatism and sectarianism that have grown in their ranks, notably during the later years of Stalin's leadership.

The central issue in our own party is whether or not we shall continue to build the Communist Party. Comrade Gates raises this basic question sharply in the November issue of *Political Affairs*, by calling for the transformation of the Communist Party into a so-called political action organization. The Gates proposal is the descendant

of the Browder Communist Political Association of 1944, which was discarded by the Communist Party as revisionist. The proposed new organization is a threat against the life of the Communist Party, hence in this speech I shall devote myself exclusively to it—my opinions upon other phases of the Party situation I have expressed in my article in the *October Political Affairs*.

ACCUSING AVALANCHE

The Gates proposal has not sprung into being overnight—it has been preparing for several months past. One phase of this preparation has been the campaign of accusing the Party of a veritable avalanche of errors during the cold war period, most of them either gross distortions or manufactured outright. The effect of this reckless campaign of wildly exaggerating the Party's errors has been to demoralize the Party membership, to undermine their confidence in the Party, and to prepare them to accept a desperate remedy, namely, the proposed political action association. But this organization would not solve any of the problems that are now plaguing the Party, instead, it would make them all worse, and for many basic reasons:

a) **The plan is liquidationist:** The main Resolution now before the Party for discussion, written under Gates' pressure, is incorrect in implying that the political association would not be liquidationist. When Browder formed the C.P.A. in 1944



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he formally dissolved the Communist Party, and if the Party were to adopt the Gates proposal it would again go through the liquidation process. And for basically the same reasons—to rid the new organization of the "taint" of its Communist past Browder lost the Party thousands of members by thus dissolving it, and undoubtedly a similar dissolution step now would further seriously weaken our already depleted forces. Moreover, by its shapeless form and limited functions, the proposed political action association could not become a mass organization. All we would be doing would be to add one more to the several left sects already in this country.

b) **It would weaken our mass contacts:** Comrade Gates maintains that the new organization would improve and extend our mass contacts. But this is political unrealism. In fact, it would be bound to worsen greatly such connections. Among other reasons because it could only be made to loom up in the enemy propaganda as a si-

ster boring-from-within body, formed for the express purpose of penetrating and dominating people's organizations of various kinds. In this respect it would be far more vulnerable than a regularly constituted Communist Party, as we would soon learn if we were foolish enough to organize it.

c) **It would provide the Communists with no additional legal protection.** One of Comrade Gates' major arguments is that his proposal political action organization would create effective legal safeguards around our movement. But to believe such an assumption one has to be naive in the extreme. If the Party were so unwise as to liquidate itself in Gates' organization it would soon learn that it was in as exposed a legal position as ever. Because the government, if it were disposed to attack us violently, would do so on the grounds that the new organization was simply the Communist Party under a new name, or that it was a Communist "front." This much we should have learned during the recent period of active government persecution against the Party.

d) **It would narrow down our field of political activity:** A political action association, such as is proposed by Comrade Gates, would definitely limit and restrict the scope of our political-electoral work, by eliminating the possibility of our placing candidates in the field during elections. Instead of thus bandoning this vital political function, the Party should follow the general policy of the British Communist Party, which is, while mainly supporting the candidates of the Labor Party, it also puts up candidates of its

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TO ALL STATE COMMITTEES,

Dear Comrades:

The Constitution-Organization Committee named by the National Committee of our Party is working as rapidly as possible to prepare a draft constitution which can be released to the Party for pre-convention discussion some time in December. All Party organizations are urged to submit proposals as the raw material for the first draft.

Proposals can deal with Preamble, purpose of organization, membership—rights and duties, democratic guarantees and disciplinary procedures, structure, dues and any other questions that would normally belong in a Constitution. Address all communications to Constitution-Organization Committee, C.P.U.S.A., 101 West 16th St., New York 11, N.Y.



PATH TO REBORN CONFIDENCE FOR CREATIVE MARXISM

(Continued from Page 3)

The net effect of these misconceptions was to cast doubt on the possibility of the working class and its allies, having achieved the necessary degree of political maturity, operating in a different historical milieu, of containing and preventing the use of violence, historically practiced by the bourgeoisie, in its attempt to stop the march of progress to socialism by the working class.

Thirdly, it was impossible to maintain a consistent clarity and understanding of the concept of the possibility of peaceful transition, so long as we tended to over-estimate the danger of war and the tempo of fascist development.

The Draft Resolution places the question of peaceful transition in such a way as to give new meaning and new understanding to this concept.

NEW PARTY OF SOCIALISM

Something fundamentally new in the Draft Resolution is the perspective for a new, united party of socialism in the United States.

This marks not only a definite break with the idea that Communists have today, or even more so, will have in the future, a monopoly on socialist ideas but also correctly discards the narrow conception of our Party today as the vanguard of the working class.

My differences with Joe Starobin, who was among the first to recognize our left-sectarian mistakes, do not center around ultimate aims or perspectives. So long as we both continue to adhere to the aim of Socialism, I am convinced that our paths will ultimately converge.

SOCIALISM INEVITABLE

Nor do these differences center around the question of the inevitability of socialism in the United States. Socialism, I continue to believe, is inevitable.

In the long run, the inevitability is determined not by the existence or non-existence of the Communist Party but by the existence of a socialist movement based on the principles of scientific socialism, no matter by whom it is headed.

My differences with Joe Starobin are connected with the question as to whether socialism in the United States will be retarded or advanced.

I believe that the liquidation of our organization as the most decisive socialist organization in this period would disastrously retard this unfolding of the socialist movement for perhaps a decade or for at least an indefinite time. Given the correction of our errors it can and will play an important role in the emergence of a new socialist movement in the United States.

Above all, it is necessary to guard against leaving a vacuum

at a time when it is recognized that the time for the emergence of a new, broader, united and mass socialist movement is not yet ripe.

OUR PARTY'S ROLE

Neither, however, am I content with any idea that all socialist-minded thinking be ultimately encompassed within the confines of the present Communist organization. This, I believe, to be uppermost in Comrade Foster's thinking on the subject. This is an unrealistic, dogmatic and left-sectarian view.

There are many factors which militate against such a perspective.

First is the widely-held view among the masses that our Party since its inception has not been an independent American Marxist Party. Moreover, so weighty is the force of tradition, I believe this thought will continue to linger in the thinking of the American working class, even after it has developed a much greater degree of class-consciousness than at present.

Secondly, is the widely-held conception, merited in great part, that the character of our Party has not been molded in American tradition but was conceived on the contrary, in the image of other parties, especially that of the Soviet Union.

Thirdly, not disconnected with the first two views, is the fact, that despite many fine contributions our Party has made to the American scene, our Party has committed too many gross errors of a left-sectarian character, in theory and mass policy.

MODEST AND LIMITED

In the face of all this, we must recognize that even with the necessary correction of these errors that are needed to be made at our Convention, our Party will be able to play an important but still only modest and limited role. A significant aspect of this modest and limited role is the contribution we can make to the emergence of a united party of socialism.

Those who decry this perspective tend, it seems to me, to hit out at a straw man. "Where," they say, "are the forces to be found today to build such a united socialist movement?" They will be found, when the time is ripe, in the hundreds of thousands who went through and left our Party, among the lower and even high echelons of leadership in the trade union movement, and in many sectors of the traditionally socialist-minded people throughout the country.

-D-

The most decisive thing that is new in the Draft Resolution is the break with doctrinaire, dogmatic approach to the principle of scientific socialism.

Involved in this, is the funda-

mental question of the independence of the American Communist Party as an independent party of Marxism.

It is this question, above all, which is rocking our Party from stem to stern. The differences in the national committee and among our membership around this question is the biggest factor of crisis in our Party today. Whether our Party achieves an outlook of complete independence or continues in a state of complete dependence (Comrade Foster), or partial dependence (Comrade Dennis, as his statement on his vote of abstention to the Resident National Committee statement in connection with the events in Poland and Hungary shows) will determine the very life and future of our Party.

Comrade Foster views the stress on independence as separating the American Marxists into an island disconnected from the international Marxist movement. This is sheer nonsense.

TASK OF MARXISTS

On the contrary, by asserting that American Marxists must in the first analysis interpret for themselves what is universally valid in the doctrines of Marx and Lenin today, and as they specifically apply to American conditions, the Draft Resolution opens the door, closed in the past, to contributions by American Marxists to the treasury of creative Marxism. Instead of keeping Marxists of various countries enchained to an alleged central fountainhead of wisdom on creative Marxism, it sets the stage for Marxists of all countries, including our own, to re-examine and develop all the doctrines of Marx and Lenin within the context of the new historical epoch in which we are living.

We esteem Krushchev or Mao-Tse-tung or Togliatti none the less, when instead of depending on them and others to develop and elaborate further the doctrines of Marx and Lenin, we independently undertake to do the very same thing; when instead of waiting for them to hand us down certain new unfolding theories accepted by the international Marxist movement, we make our own modest contribution to that unfolding.

Is it true that we have proven to be bad Marxists? Is it true that, in the past, we have not elaborated successfully one new theory on Marxism? It is uncontestedly true and the reason for this is that we have failed to think independently, to stand on our own feet.

Much has to be reviewed in connection with what is and what is not universally valid today in relation to imperialism, the law of uneven development, the national and colonial question, the dictatorship of the proletariat, to cite just a few propositions of Marx and Lenin. Certainly, the present outlook that the theory of the inevitability of war under capitalism no longer holds, brings into focus the need for a thorough re-examination under present historical conditions of what is new in these and other principles of Marx and Lenin.

BLAME OURSELVES

It is sometimes said, that in criticizing our lack of independence, we are placing the blame for our errors, dogmatism and doctrinairism on Marxist of other lands, especially the Marxists of the Soviet Union. Of course, we cannot blame anyone for our errors except ourselves.

Our lack of independence stems from a distorted idealization of the Soviet working class and leaders. This has nothing in common with a deserved homage, merited by a working class and leadership that has displayed such understanding, and courage through the fire of a socialist olution and anti-fascist war, to through the fire of a socialist achievements. At the same time,

this deserved tribute to a heroic working class and leadership does not require the sacrifice of independence by other Marxist parties.

The Draft Resolution, in emphasizing the independence of Marxist parties, has made an historic contribution to the further development of socialism in our country.

III

So much for what is historically new and important in the Draft Resolution.

By no means however can our case before the Party and the American working class and people (and we are on trial before them) be rested on solely these questions.

A key question is the future character of our Party.

Our Party is at its lowest morale point in our history. A number feel, I believe incorrectly, that the Party has outlived its historical usefulness. Many cling to outworn ideas, resisting all change. The decisive sections of the Party still hope for a perspective that will lift the Party into some semblance of legality in the eyes of the American working class. They want to be able to convince their friends and their co-workers in the shops that our organization is undergoing a rebirth which is genuine; a rebirth in which these workers can place confidence, a rebirth that takes into account our past contributions and sets the stage for new contributions to the American scene.

How can we inspire such a degree of confidence in our Party and the workers?

Nothing short of a sweeping change in the character of our Party, conforming to the sweeping changes already made in policy, represented by the historic break with left-sectarianism, doctrinairism, and dogmatism, can achieve this aim.

A-

I believe that one of the most decisive changes required is the transformation of our Party into a non-Party organization, a political action association.

Those who oppose such a step tend to feel that this would sap the Marxist spirit from our organization. But the Marxist character of our organization cannot be determined by its organizational form.

So long as the new transformed organization continues to base itself on the struggle for the immediate interests of the workers, as it must; so long as it continues to base itself on the struggle for socialism, as it must, we provide the guarantees for a fighting, Marxist organization of the working class.

But, it is asked, what is the crying need for transforming our

organization into a political action association? What is it that the association will do that our Party can't do, given correctly grounded scientific socialist theory and policy?

Space limitation does not allow for a full answer. It can be summed up in the paramount thought that the transformed organization will enable our membership to unfreeze past relations with the working class and masses; to head off head-on collisions with masses in their organizations, not only in the electoral field but in diverse fields of activities.

-B-

Space limitation here, too, permits nothing more than naming the further changes I believe necessary to develop a reborn confidence on the part of the workers, the Negro people and other sections of the population in our organization. I hope to be able to elaborate on some of the questions posed above, as well as on the proposed changes, more fully at a later date. Among these proposed changes are:

1. The transformed organization should change its name from Communist to something else.
2. The concept of democratic centralism should be rejected.
3. The concept of monolithic unity should be rejected.
4. The vanguard role of the organization should be viewed realistically so as to guarantee a leading role, instead of the vanguard role.

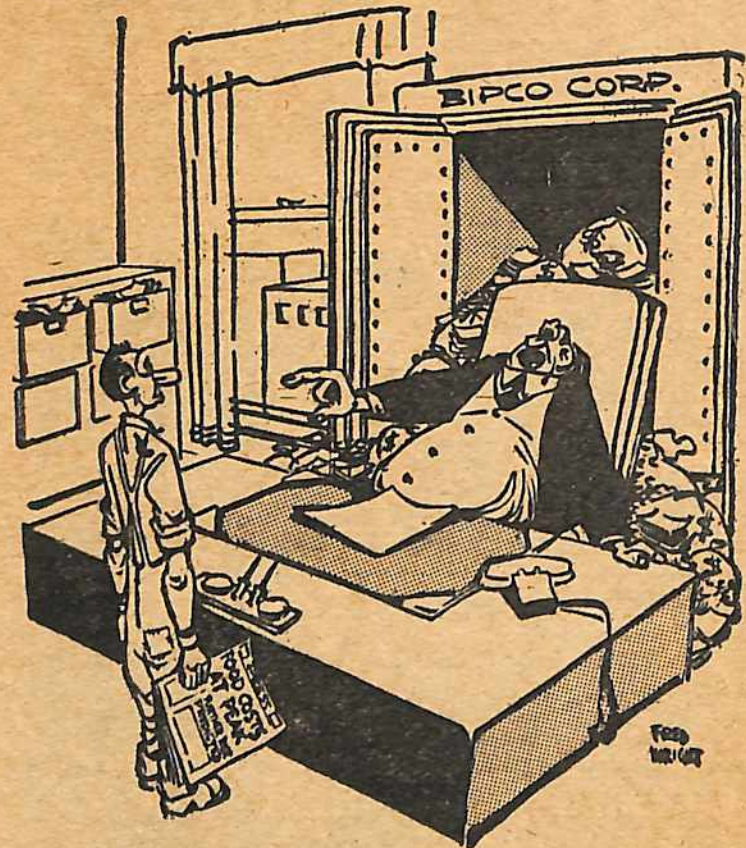
OVERHAUL LEADERSHIP

Finally, I believe that we need a complete overhauling, not only a refreshing of our top leadership, and not only nationally but in decisive states. This, too, will help convince the workers around us that our organization means business in charting a new path.

This is not projected in any spirit of "dumping" the leadership. Such leaders should continue to function in any capacity assigned them with the idea of placing their vast experience at the disposal of the new leadership.

Some say this is impossible and that there is no such new leadership to be found. It would be a real sad commentary that after two generations, despite great obstacles that would have to be overcome, if we could not select such a new leadership. I think we can.

In the discussion, each particular change has been described as a gimmick of one sort or another. But these changes taken as a whole can prove otherwise, can help the American workers to begin to develop a new confidence in our organization.



OUR COUNTRY FACING ITS MOST CRITICAL PERIOD AND YOU WORRY ABOUT AN INSIGNIFICANT THING LIKE EATING!

Time to Reappraise CP Position on Negro Question

By DOXEY WILKERSON

Communists in our country and abroad are seriously reexamining their theoretical premises and policies in the light of the new world situation we now face. The defeat of the fascist powers in World War II, the emergence of socialism to a great world system, and the powerful and ever-expanding national liberation struggles against imperialist oppression—all have brought about an entirely new relation of forces on a world scale, and thereby opened up new perspectives for the consolidation of peace, for big democratic advances, and for the transition to socialism. Many propositions once held valid are now clearly outmoded; and Marxists everywhere are confronted with the imperative need for ideological "re-tooling."

This, of course, is the process underway in our Party's pre-convention discussion. We are engaged in the collective and critical re-examination of our theoretical postulates, our political role and our organizational structure—all in the light of the changing relations of forces in our own country and in the world. We are trying to gear our Party to cope more effectively than heretofore with the realities of social developments on the American scene.

One of the many areas in which our Party's theoretical premises have lagged far behind ever-changing reality is in our outlook on the Negro question in the United States. Our theoretical position on this question was formulated in 1930 and basically reaffirmed in 1946. We viewed the Negro question as a national question—that of an oppressed "nation" in the Black Belt area of Negro majority population in the South, and that of an oppressed "national minority" elsewhere in the country. Our program to solve the problem called for struggle to realize the demands of "equal rights" for the Negro national minority, and of "self-determination" for the Negro nation.

Inherent in this "self-determination" demand was our outlook for the Negro nation in the Black Belt to mature as a nation, and to develop in the direction of—in time, itself to struggle for—some form of autonomous political existence. The 1930 Resolution, for example, called for "establishment of the state unity of the Black Belt," for bringing "together into one governmental unit all districts of the South where the majority of the settled population consists of Negroes." The 1946 Resolution re-asserted that the Negro people's "fight for liberation from oppression in the Black Belt—the area of Negro majority population—is a struggle for full nationhood, for their rightful position of full equality as a nation." It declared that "The Communist Party supports the right of self-determination for the Negro people, that is, their right to realize self-government in the Negro majority area in the South"; but it left open the question of "the form in which the right of self-determination will be exercised" for determination by future developments.

This, then, is today the theoretical outlook of the Communist Party on the Negro question. It is an untenable position, demonstrably undermined by the whole course of development of the Negro people during the past quarter-century. Our National Committee's call last April for our Party "to re-appraise our whole position on self-determination in the Black Belt" was long overdue.

At least three facts confront us in making a "re-appraisal" of our Party's theoretical position on the Negro question: (1) to review the considerations which



led to its formulation in the first place, and of its impact on the role of our Party and on the mass movement for Negro rights; (2) to analyze the reasons which argue for a change in our official position; and (3) to define precisely what we now consider a valid outlook and program for the solution of the Negro question. The first and third of these tasks are without the scope of this article, and are dealt with only tangentially. Attention is here focused on the second of these tasks—analysis of why a change is now necessary.

Many developments during recent decades raise serious doubt that our Party's conception of an "oppressed Negro nation in the Black Belt" moving in the direction of "self-determination" was valid at the outset; and they clearly demonstrate that it is wholly untenable today. Chief among them are (A) changes in the distribution of Negro population; (B) changes in the status of the Negro people in many areas of social life; (C) the dramatic recent upsurge and orientation of the Negro people's movement; (D) the role of our theoretical outlook in aggravating our Party's isolation from the Negro people's movement; and (E) the more mature, less doctrinaire, approach our Party is now taking generally in its application and development of Marxist principles in the concrete conditions of American life.

NEGRO POPULATION SHIFTS

At the turn of the century, almost nine-tenths of all Negroes lived in the South, and three-fourths in the rural-South. Even as late as 1930, when our theoretical position on the Negro question was formulated, 74 percent of the Negro population lived in the South, and 60 percent in the predominantly rural areas. By 1950, however, only 68 percent of all Negroes still lived in the Southern region, and only one-third in the rural-South. The country's Negro population is now almost equally divided among the rural South, the urban South and the northern cities; and 63 percent of the total (about the same as for whites) is urban. This changing pattern of Negro population distribution—from predominantly southern rural-farm to increas-

ingly nationwide and urban—fundamentally undermines our Party's outlook on the developmental perspectives of the Negro question in the United States.

Reflected in these changes, of course, are the great wartime waves of Negro population migration from South to North, and from rural to urban South. It is estimated that the northward movement that began during World War I, around 1915, brought at least 1,750,000 southern Negroes into the cities of the North and West by 1940; and that nearly 2,000,000 more migrated to these areas during the past 15 years. Whereas the total Negro population of the South increased by only 1.5 percent between 1940 and 1950, there was a corresponding increase of 57 percent in the rest of the country—52 percent in the North and 234 percent in the West. Some 2,600,000 Negroes living in these areas in 1950 were born in the South.

Along with this northward movement, there was a less dramatic but even more substantial Negro migration from the rural to the urban South. The proportions of southern Negroes living in the cities of the South changed from 22 percent in 1910 to 37 percent in 1940, and to 48 percent in 1950.

The impact of these migrations has been progressively to shrink and dissipate the Black Belt areas of Negro majority population. Whereas in 1900 there were some 293 counties in the South whose populations were 50 percent or more Negro, the number decreased to 221 in 1920, to 189 in 1930, to 180 in 1940, and to 156 in 1950.

In 1930 there was a large and fairly contiguous stretch of territory in the South in which Negroes constituted more than half of the total population. It covered substantial areas of southeastern Virginia, northeastern North Carolina, South Carolina, central Georgia and Alabama, and the lower Mississippi Valley—with extensions into Arkansas, Tennessee, Florida and east Texas. The 189 counties involved constituted the heart of the Black Belt, where 4,790,000 Negroes lived; and it spread outward to embrace some 288 additional counties whose populations were from 30 to 50 percent Negro. Here was the com-

mon territorial base of what our Party conceived as the Negro nation.

By 1950, however, this more or less continuous area of Negro majority population no longer existed. Instead, there are now three smaller groupings of Negro majority counties, geographically separated by substantial corridors of majority white population. One is along the coast of Virginia and northeast North Carolina. Another extends from southeast North Carolina through much of South Carolina, central Georgia and south-central Alabama, and into the northeast corner of Mississippi. The third centers in the Mississippi Valley, extending from north of Memphis down to the east-west border of Mississippi and Louisiana. The Negro population of the 156 counties involved is 2,109,000.

Thus, it is no longer possible to speak of a continuous area of Negro majority population in the South. The former such area has been broken up into three parts; the aggregate territory involved has been greatly reduced; and the Negro population in the remaining Negro majority counties is less than one-half that of the corresponding Black Belt areas of 1930. Moreover, there is nothing to warrant a long-time perspective of stabilization for the existing Negro majority areas in the South; indeed, decisive economic trends suggest quite the reverse.

In the first place, the plantation-cropping system, which operates to retard Negro population movements, has continued to decline sharply during recent decades. Between 1930 and 1950, for example, the number of Negro farm operators in the 1930 Black Belt area decreased by one-third; the number of Negro tenants and croppers decreased from 494,000 to 279,000, or by 44 percent; and the number of Negro farm wage-workers decreased from 293,000 to 163,000, also by 44 percent. Second, underlying this development is the fact that cotton production, in which the former Black Belt area was for a long time supreme, is shifting increasingly to the mechanized, non-plantation areas toward the West (Texas, California, Oklahoma, etc.). In 1950, for the first time, these areas produced a larger proportion of the nation's cotton

Theoretical Material on the Negro Question

In this issue, the Discussion Bulletin is presenting special material on theoretical aspects of the Negro question. These articles are described by their authors as "working papers" reflective of viewpoints now being debated in the Resolution Committee and the Negro Commission preliminary to the preparation of a concise Draft Resolution on the Party's Theoretical Position on the Negro Question.

As will be evident, there are wide areas of agreement expressed in each of these three articles. At the same time there are important shadings of difference and divergent views which require much wider discussion for their clarification and resolution. They are to be seen in: (1) the characterization of the Negro people; (2) the reasons for eliminating the slogan of political self-determination from our Party program; (3) the nature and assessment of the gains made toward freedom of the Negro people.

We publish this material in order that the Party membership will be able to join in the discussion of these questions on the basis of the work done by the committee thus far, and thereby assist it in producing the best possible Resolution.

DISCUSSION COMMITTEE

crop (46 percent) than did the 1930 Black belt area (32 percent). Third, the rapid industrial development of the South since around 1940, opening up some increased job opportunities for Negro workers, has proceeded and continues in the big urban centers outside the old Black Belt area. Fourth, the continued expansion of industry in the cities of the North and West affords even greater employment opportunities for Negro workers.

These and related economic trends are primarily responsible for the recent Negro migrations out of the Black Belt and the break-up of the formerly contiguous area of Negro majority population. It is possible that future setbacks in the economic and political life of the country may halt, or even reverse, these trends temporarily; but the long-range prospect is for continuation of the historic tendency toward dissipation of the Black Belt area of Negro population majority.

SOCIAL ADVANCES OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE

Along with the mass migration of Negroes from rural to urban South and from South to North and West during recent decades, and functionally related to these population shifts, have come very important advances in the economic, social and political status of the Negro people. These changes, especially since the early years of World War II, open up perspectives for the Negro in American life which are quite different from those our Party conceived a quarter-century ago.

First, there has been substantial advance in the Negro's economic status. For example, the proportions of Negro workers employed in non-farm occupations in the South increased between 1940 and 1950 from 50 to 66 percent for men, and from 80 to 86 percent for men (chiefly in the least desirable jobs in southern industry), and from 5 to 10 percent for women (more than half of them in laundries). Increases "above" the level of operatives, service workers and laborers were from 7 to 12 percent for men, and from 6 to 12 percent for women. The proportions employed in service occupations alone remained at 11 percent for men, but decreased from 59 to 45 percent for women.

Although quite limited, these shifts in the occupational distribution of southern Negro workers—especially that from

(Continued on Page 6)

Time to Reappraise CP Position on Negro Question

(Continued from Page 5)

farm to non-farm—reflect very important advances in social and economic status. Not only does the Negro have greater personal security in the large urban centers than on the countryside, along with more ready access to the ballot, he also enjoys a much higher standard of living. In 1954, for example, the median (i.e. most typical) Negro family income was \$2,425 in the urban South, as compared with \$742 in the rural-farm South. Moreover, this increased income of the working class masses operates substantially to raise the income levels of middle class Negroes in business and professional occupations based on the southern Negro ghetto.

The distribution of Negro men among the non-farm occupations in the cities of the North and West is not much different from that in the urban South; and there were only minor gains in relative occupational status between 1940 and 1950. There was, however, a very marked and very important increase in the number of Negro men in occupations "above" the operative-service-laborer level—from less than 110,000 in 1940 to almost 270,000 in 1950, or about 146 percent. Moreover, there were significant relative advances for Negro women workers—increases from 11 to 25 percent in the proportion of operatives, and from 3 to 9 percent in the proportion of clerical and sales workers, along with a decrease from 80 to 57 percent in the proportion of service workers.

Thus, in the decade of the 40's, the urban North and West was able to absorb nearly 2,000,000 Negro migrants—mostly from the South, with little education or industrial experience—and still to sustain some modest improvements relatively and a very big gain absolutely in the occupational status of Negro men, together with substantial relative advances for Negro women. What this implies for the overall economic progress of the Negro people is suggested by the fact that their 1954 median family income in the northern cities was approximately \$3,260—35 percent more than in the urban South, and 340 percent more than in the rural-farm South.

Second, there has been a very big advance, both absolute and relative, in the educational status of the Negro people. This came partly through increased urbanization of the Negro population, but chiefly in direct response to powerful organized struggles by the Negro people.

In the southern states with segregated school systems, where some 2,000,000 Negro elementary and high school pupils constitute one-fourth of the total, there have been very substantial improvements in the extent and financial support of Negro public schools. Between 1940 and 1952, current expenditures per Negro pupil increased from \$21.54 to \$115.08 (435 percent); expenditures for capital outlays per Negro pupil increased almost 30-fold, from 99 cents to \$29.58; the average length of Negro school terms increased from 160 to 177 days (10 percent); and average annual salaries of Negro teachers increased from \$487 to \$2,389 (390 percent).

These absolute improvements were accompanied by a considerable closing of the gap between white and Negro school conditions in the South. Thus, current expenditure per pupil in Negro schools amounted in 1940 to only 43 percent of that in white schools, as compared with 70 percent in 1952. Corresponding relative gains during this 12-year period were from 97 to 99 percent in length of school term, from 23 to 82 percent in capital outlay expenditures per pupil, and from 54 to 87 per-



...AND MAY YOU HAVE A HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

cent in the average annual salaries of teachers.

One of the most significant reflections of the Negro's overall educational progress is seen in the difference in amount of schooling between the "older" and "younger" generations of Negroes living in the South in 1950. A recent study showed that 49 percent of the Negro men who were born between 1905-09 had completed less than five years in school, as compared with 19 percent for those born between 1931-32. Only 5 percent of the older generation, as compared with 15 percent of the younger generation, graduated from high school.

The Negro people's widespread struggles to win these educational gains in the South, together with the effects of improved education in strengthening their demands for still further advance, are a very important part of what led to the powerful and victorious movement to outlaw segregated schools, and now actually to achieve the integration of white and Negro education in the South. By last fall, this struggle for integrated schools had been won for about 300,000 Negro pupils and 2,500,000 white pupils in 723 school districts of nine southern and border states and the District of Columbia; and its ultimate triumph throughout the South is certain to come.

Third, the status of Negroes has been improved in most other areas of American life. Some 2,000,000 Negro workers, for example, are now an integral part of the organized labor movement; and in addition to considerable representation on secondary levels of union leadership, they sit in the top councils of the AFL-CIO.

There has been a big increase in the number of Negroes registered to vote in the South, especially since the Supreme Court outlawed the white primary in 1944. In all states of the Deep South, for example, the number of Negro voters increased from 150,000 in 1940 to 1,110,000 in 1952; and for the whole South the number approximates 1,300,000 today. Small but increasing numbers of Negroes are being elected to local public offices in the South; and the Negro vote outside the South represents the potential balance of power in 61 congressional districts.

Remarkably rapid progress has been made during the past decade toward the elimination of Jimcrow practices in the armed services. The extent of mob violence against Negroes in the South has waned considerably. Racial segregation has been almost eliminated in inter-state transportation, and is progressively being destroyed in municipal parks, swimming pools, golf courses and other public places

in the South. Important advances have been made in breaking down the still dominant pattern of residential segregation. And along with this weakening of the Jimcrow social structure—in shops and unions and the community at large—millions of white and Negro people are beginning to develop normal relationships with one another, and thereby to undermine the influence of racist ideology on the masses of white Americans.

These gains on many fronts are a product of concerted struggle by the Negro people and their allies in an extended period of relative economic prosperity and social advance for the whole American population. They must be appraised in the light of the wide range of special caste-like discriminations which continue to hold Negroes far behind their advancing white countrymen.

The old Black Belt area of Negro population concentrations, now narrowed and partitioned, still persists much as it has been for generations; and the declining plantation system on which it rests continues to display remarkable tenacity in the old slave areas of the Southeast and the Mississippi Delta. Some 5,000,000 Negro Americans still reside in this and similar areas of the rural South. Most of them live under conditions of extreme poverty, with grossly inadequate schools, faced with the constant threat—and the frequent actuality—of physical violence from such forces as the Klan and the Citizens Councils, and barred from any participation, whatever, in the political life of their communities. The general social progress of recent decades has had very little meaning for them.

Even in the rest of the country there remains a great gulf between the economic and social status of Negro and white citizens. Very few new jobs have been opened up for Negro workers by the recent industrial expansion in the South; and employment opportunities for Negroes in the North and West are severely restricted by flagrant racial discrimination. As a direct result, the 1954 median family income for Negroes in the United States (\$2,876) was only 60 percent as much as that for the whites (\$4,827); and 54 percent of all Negro families (as compared with 29 percent for whites) were forced to live on less than \$3,000 a year. The super-exploitation of Negro workers remains the major source of extra-profits for the monopolies which dominate the economy of our country.

Despite the recent improvements in Negro school conditions, the proportion of "younger generation" Negro men in the South with less than five years of schooling (19 percent) is still more than three times as large

as for young white men (6 percent). For every \$1.00 southern public school systems spent on the average white pupil for current operations during 1952, they spent only 70 cents on the average Negro pupil. If educational opportunities and facilities for Negroes approximated those for whites in the South, in 1950 there would have been 74,800 (instead of 30,600) Negro high school graduates and 13,200 (instead of 5,800) Negro college graduates. Two and one-half years after the Supreme Court outlawed Jimcrow schools, approximately 90 percent of all Negro pupils in the South still attend "legally" mandatory segregated schools. Even in the North, where school segregation has long been "prohibited" by law, the practice of racial segregation and other forms of discrimination against Negro pupils is extremely common.

Negroes are still murdered in the South and their homes bombed in many parts of the nation for nothing more than efforts to exercise their constitutional rights. Jimcrow still defines the basic position of Negroes in the social structure of our entire country. The President and Congress persist in refusing to take decisive action to protect the persons and the democratic rights of the Negro people. And racial prejudice is still deep-rooted and widespread in the white population of both the South and North.

In short, Negro Americans still remain, very definitely, the "second-class citizens" of our country; and that basic fact, together with its manifold harmful consequences for the nation as a whole, has been changed only in degree by the many democratic gains of the Negro people have won during the past quarter-century.

What is "new" and extremely important about recent progressive trends in Negro life is that once relatively stable patterns of oppression are now in flux. Racial barriers have been breached at many points; and the whole Jimcrow edifice is threatened with destruction. There now is a realistic perspective for the Negro people to win truly decisive victories in the fight for democratic rights in the period immediately ahead; and this happy outlook—for an early qualitative leap forward—is quite different from that which prevailed when our Party's theoretical position on the Negro question was formulated in 1930.

TRENDS IN THE NEGRO PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

The dramatic upsurge of the Negro people's movement during the past two decades is one of the most significant political developments in our country; and the emerging new features of this movement have profound implications for our Party's theoretical outlook on the Negro question.

In the first place, the center of gravity of the Negro people's fight for equal rights has shifted from the northern metropolitan areas to the Deep South. Whereas the spotlight once focused on Harlem, Southside Chicago and similar ghettos in the North; the main struggle now proceeds in the big cities and rural Black Belt areas of the South—Montgomery, Tallahassee, Columbia, Clarendon County, to mention only a few. Marxists always understood the necessity and inevitability of this development; because there can be no real solution of the Negro problem in the United States without destruction of the roots of the Jimcrow system in the South. Recent developments have now placed this task on the agenda of history.

Second, new and advanced demands are being pressed by the Negro people on all fronts.

The decades-old fight for "equal" facilities in the Negro separate school has been transformed into a powerful struggle for the complete and immediate end of school segregation. And so it is in public transportation, recreation, housing, jobs, the armed services, trade union leadership, voting, representation in public office, and every other area of American life. Objectives are now actively fought for that seemed utopian only two decades ago. Destruction of the whole Jimcrow system is now posed by the Negro people as an immediate and attainable goal. What is becoming the dominant mood of the entire Negro people was effectively expressed by Rev. Martin Luther King, dynamic young leader of the Montgomery Improvement Association, in his simple declaration: "We have decided we can no longer live with Jimcrow."

Third, there is developing a new high level of direct participation by the masses of Negroes in the fight for civil rights. Witness, for example, the local mass demonstrations in Prince Edwards County, Virginia, and Clarendon County, South Carolina—both Negro majority areas—which yesterday kicked off the triumphant campaign to have the Supreme Court outlaw segregated schools; and today, in many parts of the South, the heroism of Negro children and their parents in defying the white-supremacist mobs which are trying to prevent their realizing the benefits of this court victory. Recall the great mass demonstrations throughout the country last fall and winter in protest against the foul murder of young Emmett Till. Consider what is happening when the entire Negro populations of large southern cities organize and sustain for months on end the virtually complete boycott of segregated busses. Note the vast dimensions attained by the still growing right-to-vote movement in the South. The day is passing when a small, militant Negro minority carries the brunt of the struggle for the Negro masses; the prevailing trend now is toward involvement of the majority of the Negro people directly in the struggle.

Fourth, the Negro people are strengthening as never before the internal bonds of cohesion which makes them a distinct people. The burgeoning movement in the South finds echo in militant supporting struggles in the North. Negro workers in the shops, small farmers on the countryside, students and teachers in the schools and colleges, churchmen of all denominations, professionals in other fields, and the small but important stratum of capitalists—all are now moving in an ever greater concert of struggle for the attainment of common goals. We are now witnessing the development to a very high level of that Negro people's unity—transcending class and geographical barriers—which led our Party long ago to characterize the Negro question in the United States as a national question, that of an oppressed people. It was and remains a correct characterization.

Fifth, the Negro people are rapidly building up their organized strength. Negro trade union membership has doubled in the past 15 years, bringing into being a vital and influential Negro caucus movement in the unions, and imparting a new quality of working class militancy to most all of the Negro organizations. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, now re-emerging as the fighting vanguard of the whole Negro people.

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Time to Reappraise CP Position on Negro Question



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ple, is rapidly growing in membership (by 65 percent during the past year) and extending its influence throughout the nation, especially in the South. Negro fraternal societies—most notably the 500,000 Elks, the several church denominations, scores of women's organizations, college fraternities and sororities, and professional associations of all kinds are strengthening their organizations and entering increasingly into the economic and political arenas of struggle. Even the social-work Urban League is taking on a militant hue and beginning, for the first time in its long history, to build up a mass membership.

Moreover, these many Negro organizations are moving more and more to coordinate their struggles. The N.A.A.C.P. has played an increasingly important role to this end. But probably the highest expression of this growing inter-organizational unity came with emergence of the State of the Race Conference last April, when 73 leaders of the main Negro organizations met for the express purpose of concerting their efforts. Not since the National Negro Congress was launched in 1936 has there been anything approximating this new coordinating center, which embraces practically the whole of the Negro people's movement and promises to issue in a new stage of organized unity in struggle.

Sixth, the Negro people are consciously reaching out for—and winning—important white allies in their fight for civil rights. This is most evident in the N.A.A.C.P.'s recent development of close ties with the labor movement, its even closer working relations with the American Jewish Congress and the American Civil Liberties Union, and its coordinating leadership of some 50 white and Negro national organizations which are brought together periodically for joint action on specific civil rights issues. But this trend toward closer relations with labor and other liberal white allies is becoming even more general in the Negro people's movement; and it is getting results. Never since the day of Civil War and Reconstruction have the struggles of the Negro people received such active support as they are getting today from predominantly white labor, church, professional, civic and other organizations throughout the country.

Moreover, there is growing realization among the Negro people that their democratic struggles here are closely linked with—and strengthened by—the anti-imperialist, national movements of the colonial and recently liberated peoples of Asia and Africa, and by the growing strength of the socialist world. Bandung had profound repercussions among all strata of the Negro people. And Negroes

sense that increased competition between the United States and the Soviet Union for leadership of the so-called "uncommitted two-thirds of mankind" operates enormously to enhance their civil rights bargaining power here at home.

Finally, there has developed an overwhelming unity in the outlook of the Negro people. It is summed up in the term "integration." Negroes definitely do not want any separatist line of development, politically or otherwise apart from the main currents of American life. Although some tendencies toward separation still exist, they are but pale shadows of the big nationalist upsurge of the Carvey Movement in the 1920's; and their influence is inconsequential. Nor do Negroes seek an undifferentiated "white" society. There are fringe tendencies along this line also; but they by no means reflect the prevailing consciousness of the Negro people. What the overwhelming mass of the Negro people clearly want is full respect for their dignity as Negro Americans, together with their unfettered right to equal participation, as individuals and as organized groups, in the economic, political and social life of their country. This is the real meaning of "integration"; and this is unquestionably the dominant and controlling aim of the Negro people's movement today.

None of these interrelated trends in the Negro people's movement has yet reached full maturity—all are still emerging; but their over-all impact upon the movement has already decisively shaped its general line of development in the period ahead. The struggle will center increasingly in the South; and it will press for ever more advanced demands, with major emphasis on the right to vote and for full representation in the councils of government. The Negro people will continue to build up their organized strength throughout the country, and further to augment their striking power by ever-widening alliances, first of all with the labor movement. Their fight for civil rights will merge increasingly with the democratic struggles of labor and other progressive forces—to break the stranglehold by which the Wall Street-Dixiecrat alliance now obstructs the forward movement of our whole country, to restore the Bill of Rights as the effective law of the land, to consolidate peace, and to raise the living standards and strengthen the economic security of the masses of all people, on the countryside and in the cities. Negroes will also come to realize, in time, that monopoly capital is the main enemy of Negro freedom, the decisive buttress of the whole Jimcrow system; and when that time comes they will take their place as a major component

of that anti-monopoly coalition which will one day command the machinery of our government.

In the process of the great democratic struggles which alone can issue in these historic developments, the Negro people will achieve, indeed, their cherished goal of "integration." And farther down the road, their decisive sectors will join forces with that inevitable revolutionary movement—led by the working class and guided by its Marxist vanguard—which is destined to effect the socialist reorganization of American society.

This seems to be the general strategic line of march forecast by recent developments in the Negro people's movement, and inherent in its relations to the over-all class struggle of which it is an inseparable part. It is a course of development toward ever more integral participation in the economic, political and social life of our country as a whole. It definitely is not the autonomous course of development which our Party envisioned when its theoretical position on the Negro question was formulated 26 years ago.

SECTARIAN IMPACT OF OUR THEORY

The recent upsurge of the Negro people's movement has been paralleled by the diminishing role and influence of our Party in its development. This is, indeed, a sobering contradiction, especially in view of our vital and leading role in the movement in the past, and our continuing understanding of the prime political significance of the Negro question for the working class and our country as a whole.

There are many causes of this progressive isolation of our Party from the Negro people's movement, particularly the lag in adjusting our tactical line to the emergence of many different organized centers giving leadership to the struggle. Our concern here, however, is for the role which our theoretical outlook played in helping to further our isolation from the Negro masses. Its influence has been definitely sectarian, in several respects.

First, the overwhelming majority of the Negro people abhor and reject any outlook for their separation—in any form whatever, even temporarily—from the American nation as a whole. Our Party's once high level of prestige and influence among the Negro people was developed in spite of—not because of—our little-understood slogan of "self-determination"; and it was based chiefly on Communist leadership in militant struggles for Negro rights in our country, and on the liberating national policy of the Soviet Union on a world scale. I cannot think of a single Negro leader outside our Party who has been even tolerant of our outlook for the establishment of a Negro nation. Our dogmatic insistence that the Negro's development must proceed along lines which ran counter to the aspirations and actual experiences of the Negro masses could not but tend to isolate us from them.

Second, we correctly understood "self-determination in the Black Belt" as a revolutionary demand, pointing to completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the South. But in our emphasis on this strategic objective—which still defines the major democratic task before our country, many of us tended to look upon "mere reforms"—relatively minor improvements in the social conditions of the Negro people—as of little consequence. Indeed, some of our comrades seemed over-ready to deprecate the gains being won by the Negro people, as if they somehow ran counter to our

revolutionary outlook. Such attitudes, of course, were theoretically incorrect; for they overlooked the fact that big qualitative leaps in social development come through the accumulation of small quantitative changes. But the main point here is that such negative attitudes toward the reforms being fought for and hailed by the Negro people served to further our isolation from them.

Third, these negative attitudes toward the gains being won by the Negro people became translated into open hostility toward their "reformist" leaders. Many among us could hardly mention the names of these leaders without attaching such choice epithets as "betrayers," "lackeys of imperialism," and many more. Thus did we earn the active opposition of precisely those leaders with the greatest influence among the Negro masses; and in so doing we furthered our isolation from the whole of the Negro people.

Fourth, our strategic orientation on the Negro question also contributed to our pre-occupation with Left-led organizational centers in the fight for Negro rights. Only we, with our true revolutionary outlook, could really be trusted to lead the Negro masses to ultimate victory; and we sought vainly to attract them from the established, main-line organizations through which they continued to operate. The inevitable result was to leave our Party standing largely on the side-lines, while the Negro people's movement forged ahead at an ever-increasing tempo.

I think there is no question that our Party's present extreme isolation from the Negro masses is, in very large measure, a function of our theoretical outlook for the Negro "nation" in the Black Belt to develop in the direction of some form of political autonomy. We simply have been pointing in a direction opposite to that in which the Negro people were actually moving.

THE FIGHT AGAINST DOCTRINAIRE MARXISM

Our Party's recent re-examination of its approach to the application and further development of Marxist theory is leading us to conclude, as stated in the Draft Resolution for the 16th National Convention, that we have "suffered historically from dogmatic application of Marxist theory to the American scene," and that "insufficient development of the theoretical work of our Party over the past decades has contributed toward our doctrinaire acceptance and mechanical application of many theoretical propositions." Surely it is that our Party's theoretical position on the Negro question affords a prime example of these dogmatic and doctrinaire errors.

There is no question that the basic theoretical principles of scientific socialism on the national question have universal validity. The teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the emergence of nations with the rise of capitalism, on the class roots of national oppression, on the right of nations to self-determination, on complete equal rights for national minorities, on the leading roles of the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat at different stages of the national movement, on the alliance between the working class and the oppressed nations against imperialism, on the two-front struggle against great-nation chauvinism and narrow nationalism—their teachings on these and many related questions have been proved, time and again, to illuminate and afford effective guidance for national developments throughout the world.

It was with good reason,

therefore, that our Party acted on the premise that Marxist theory on the national question has meaning for the Negro question in the United States; it certainly does. Where we erred was in the tacit assumptions, (1) that the development of Marxist theory on the national question had been completed, and the answers to all questions safely written down where we could find them in the classics; and (2) that the application of this theory to the Negro question in our country consisted largely in adopting forms and slogans that proved successful in the Soviet Union. The one is the essence of dogmatism, the other of doctrinairism; and both operated to stifle concrete analysis and creative generalization on the basis of the peculiarities in the development of the Negro people—which is the essence of true Marxist methodology.

There are similarities, indeed, between the relative brief development of the Negro people in America and the far longer development—going back to ancient times—of the Ukrainian, Georgian, Armenian and other peoples of the Soviet Union; but there are also vast differences. It was not our task, as Marxists, to proceed as if the formulae by which the Bolsheviks solved the national question could be transplanted fully-blown to American soil. Rather, our task was to examine concretely the differences between the development of the Negro people in our country and national developments in other lands, to test our general principles in the light of American experience, to determine what there is in these principles that applies to the Negro question in the United States—and how differently they must be applied, and also, if need be, further to develop the theoretical propositions of our science in this field.

There have always been many comrades among us who sensed—as did the Negro people—that our concept of an "oppressed Negro nation" and our slogan of "self-determination in the Black Belt" were patently alien to the American scene, that they simply did not correspond to the actual or prospective development of the Negro people. It is a tragedy that our movement did not welcome their skepticism, and encourage their theoretical exploration of more fruitful hypotheses; for the tasks of creative analysis which we should have undertaken long ago still remain largely undone.

CONCLUSION

Thus, for the past quarter-century our Party has been hobbled by a theoretical position on the Negro question which is contradicted by its actual and prospective course of development, which operates to further our isolation from the Negro people, and which we are now coming to understand was an incorrect, doctrinaire application of Marxist principles on the national question in the first place. We do, indeed, need to "re-appraise"—in fact, to abandon—this unreal and disorienting theoretical outlook.

The Negro question is, as we have long understood, a national question, involving the oppression of a distinct people. Moreover, as with national questions generally, it is closely bound up with and will find its ultimate solution in relation to the broader struggles of the working class and its allies to curb the reactionary power of monopoly capital, and eventually to reorganize our society along socialist lines. Our task now is to define a theoretical outlook on this question which is consistent with developing reality, and which enhances our ability to help strengthen the Negro people's movement and cement its ties with the working class.

Communist Relations to the Negro People's Movement

By JAMES E. JACKSON, JR.

(In order that the theses for debate are sharply set forth and made easily identifiable the writer has employed the positive style of a resolution to express his views in this article.)
J. J.

At midcentury the Negro people in the U. S. number about 16 millions, some one-tenth of the total U. S. population, approximately one-fourth of whom still inhabit the rural towns and cities of the old plantation area in the southeastern states where they have been from slavery time and remain to this day in a part of this area the majority people. In the South as a whole live two-thirds (about 11 million) of the Negro people in the U. S. The remaining third (about five million) of the Negro population are to be found widely distributed throughout the rest of the country, but particularly in large compact settlements in the major industrial and commercial metropolises of the Northern, Mid-Western and West Coast cities.

As a consequence of the Civil War, the Negro people won their formal constitutional status of equal citizenship, yet, to this day, Negroes nowhere enjoy fully genuine equality of rights and opportunities with their fellow white citizens.

In the Southern states where two-thirds of the Negro people live, their oppression and unequal status, their segregation, their disfranchisement, their social pariah position, is not simply a matter of racist custom and white supremacy practices; it is the subject of a system of laws ruthlessly and punitively enforced by all the police and judicial powers of the state and local governments.

In the rest of the country Negroes are also subjected to an unequal status. The one-third of the Negroes who live outside of the South, while removed from the formal legal yoke of the Jim Crow laws of the Southern states, are nonetheless subjected to segregation and all manner of racist discrimination and social ostracism.

The manifest character of the status of the Negro people in the U. S. is that of a racially distinctive nationality of a highly industrialized, largely urbanized country. The Negro people are deprived by law or custom of their full and equal rights as citizens and are victims of super-exploitation and racist discrimination and indignities. The American Negro nationality in the United States has its origin and roots in that Negro community whose locus is that area of the Southeastern states wherein they have historically constituted the majority of the population (the Black Belt).

The term "nationality" as herein used is descriptive of a distinct people, more widespread geographically than a "community," more significant in its status and cohesive in its outlook than a "national minority," BUT NOT CONCEIVED OF OBJECTIVELY OR SUBJECTIVELY—AS A NATION.

The Communist Party withdraws from its program the slogan of "self-determination for the Negro nation." In doing so, however, the Communist Party does not (nor could it!) presume to put into question the inherent right of such a community of people as the nation-like formation of the areas of Negro majority in the Deep South, to fully determine the pattern and course of its own development.

When the C. P. incorporated this natural right of a people into its program as a political slogan, it became in effect an estimate of the status and course of development of the Negro people's freedom struggle in the U. S. Furthermore, it took on



the weight of a directive to Communists in the Negro freedom fight to influence the course of struggle and demands of the movement in this direction. To retain our previous position would be a presumptuous judgment and unwarranted interference in the actual course the Negro people's movement is taking.

In withdrawing our slogan for political self-determination, at the same time we assert the irrevocable right of the Negro people in the U. S. (as is the natural right of every oppressed people and community) to determine their own course in unfolding their freedom struggle and to define the objectives and goals of that struggle in conformity with their own will.

The right of a people to determine, to define for themselves, the conduct, form and framework through and by means of which they wage their freedom struggle is an inalienable group-right and is to the community what the rights of man are to the individual.

The universal demand of the whole of the Negro nationality, of all class strata, wheresoever they live in the U. S., is for the means of exercising full and unfettered economic, political and social-cultural equality in rights and opportunity with all other members of the American people.

The Negro people's freedom struggle, therefore, is not merely a civil liberties cause, it is basically a political struggle; it is a struggle for adequate power in the hands of the oppressed people themselves so that they may secure and defend the integrity of their Constitutional rights as free and equal citizens of the U. S.

The fight of the Negro people for freedom from oppression and for equal rights merges with, and is an integral part of the general struggle of labor and the popular democratic forces of the whole American people for the preservation and extension of democracy against the reactionary interests of the monopoly ruling circles.

The struggle of the Negro people for equal rights and of the popular movement for general democratic reforms throughout the U. S. bears upon and is co-related to the striving of the disfranchised Negro community in the Deep South for its full complement of political rights.

The struggle of that part of the American Negro nationality

resident in the Deep South to secure its equal rights in the areas of its majority remains one of the basic elements for the achievement of equality of status and citizenship for the Negro people as a whole.

The struggle for genuine representative government in respect to the Deep South areas of Negro majority corresponds to the struggle (a) for the general equal rights of the Negro people in the country as a whole and in all of the Southern States in particular, and (b) the broad popular struggle for democratic rights in the country as a whole, and the particular struggle for democratic reforms—for raising the level of democratic rights and practices in the Southern States to that of the country as a whole.

The stress on the broader arena of the struggle for the democratization of the Southern states as the main feature in approaching the question of struggle for political equality for the Southern areas of Negro majority (the Black Belt) must not be construed as minimizing the importance of the struggle for basic democratic and economic reforms within the special southern area of the Negro majority itself. On the contrary, the full weight of the labor and popular democratic movement throughout the South and the Nation must be brought to bear upon wiping out the semi-feudal economic relations, political disfranchisement, and cultural degradation which characterize the conditions of the masses who still live in their millions under the yoke of the plantation system.

Although the plantation economy diminishes in area and holds in its immediate grip only a relatively small portion of the toiling masses of the South, it still wields a dominating influence over the laws and customs of the entire South. It is to sustain the rotten, semi-feudal plantation system of monstrous robbery and oppression of the Negro and white farm toilers that the most barbarous anti-Negro, white supremacy and fascist-like laws and customs are woven into the superstructure of the state and local governments, and which poisons the democratic atmosphere of the entire South and is a reactionary drag on the whole country. To wipe out the economic base of the plantation landlords, through progressive land reform measures in the interest of the landless and poor

farmers, accompanied by measures to secure and safeguard the suffrage rights of the Negro masses lies at the very heart of the struggle for democratic progress and equal rights for the Negro people in the South today.

Therefore, the struggle for freedom and democracy for the Southern areas of historic Negro majority is revealed as fundamentally a struggle for democratic reforms for the whole Southern people in all Southern states, that is: for free and universal suffrage, for genuinely representative government, for wiping out the segregation laws, for laws to implement and apply the Bill of Rights, for wiping out anti-labor laws, etc.

The Negro people in unrelenting battle for their rights, have wrested from the ruling class a certain number of measures of opportunity to advance their material and cultural status from the low grounds of near-chattel status at the turn of the last century. This material and cultural advancement achieved by the Negro people in the U. S. was meshed in a minor gear to the expansive technical growth and development of the total economy and objectively speaking was a by-product of this general phenomenon. However, such improvements in the material and cultural conditions of life which the Negro people have secured have in no way modified the harsh reality of their status as the most exploited and all-sidedly-oppressed part of the American people. The material advances made by the people of the country as a whole outstrip the modest improvements in status which the Negro people have secured for themselves. The gap in status remains. Improvements in the material condition and ameliorations of the oppression of the Negro people are relative; their economic, political and social oppression, their deprivation of equal rights remain constant.

The changes which have taken place in the position of Negroes in American life although not basically altering their status as an oppressed and circumscribed people, are nonetheless of great significance for the future prospects of the development of this people.

In the course of the economic development of the country—featuring a rapid tempo of urbanization and industrial growth—the Negro people, who as late

as the 1930's were basically an agrarian people had become at mid-century an urban people in the country as a whole, and in the Southern states of their major population concentration as well. This development has resulted in a basic shift in the relative strength of the classes composing the Negro people. Previously the major strata of the Negro people were bound by economic ties to the soil. The economic essence of the oppression of the Negro people then was manifested in the landlord-capitalist exploitation of sharecroppers, toiling farmers and other class groupings of the rural poor who were the largest strata of the Negro population.

Now by far the largest strata of the Negro population are their urban working people with an industrial proletariat of about two million. Now the economic essence of the oppression of the Negro people is manifested in the discrimination against, and economic exploitation of, Negro working men and women by industrial capitalists and monopoly.

As the numbers of Negro wage workers increased in the cities, the base was created for and there has taken place a progressive growth of the Negro urban middle class of professionals, intellectuals and small retail shopkeepers.

A numerically small class of Negro capitalists and wealthy businessmen continue to retain a precarious base in the Negro market in certain branches of consumer services and trade side by side with the dominant big white capitalist trusts and monopolies which dominate the Negro market.

Although no longer in their main characteristics an agrarian people, nevertheless, approximately three-tenths of the 11 million Negroes of the Southern states and one-half of the Negro population in the Deep Southern areas of Negro majority (the Black Belt) reside on the land.

Side by side with the emergence of a small but significant number of relatively well-to-do Negro independent owners of small and middle sized farms utilizing modern equipment and technique, the bulk of the Negro farmer masses toil under the old yoke of semi-feudal oppression and exploitation on the big plantations as pauperized sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and farm laborers. The Negro farmers who are owners or cash renters are largely restricted to the worst land.

Whereas the existence of a sizable portion of the population retaining roots in the land remains an important factor in giving a certain stability to the Negro community in the Black Belt of the Deep South, taken by itself, it no longer provides the assurance of permanency or continuing development to that nation-like community upon its territory as of old when the southern economy was mainly plantation economy and the Negro population primarily a rural peasantry. Now, the future of this historic "Black Belt" community as an area of Negro majority will primarily depend upon the factor of industrial growth within the areas of Negro majority and the elimination of all barriers to employment of Negroes in these enterprises.

From the earliest days of their being forcibly brought into this country as slaves down to the present time, the Negro people have waged an unending struggle to secure their full freedom and equality.

The unchanging aspirations of the Negro people for freedom and equality, the present circumstances in the country, and the existing forms and manner of oppression of the Negro people,

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have given rise to the development of the present-day Negro people's movement for equality and freedom.

The present character of the Negro people's movement is that of a people's (all class) movement of struggle for popular-democratic reforms. It seeks to secure to the Negro people the full complement of democratic rights and opportunities claimed for the white citizens of the U. S.; for complete economic, political and social equality. Its point of departure is that of equal rights for the Negro people but at the same time it reflects an increasing consciousness of the indissoluble inter-connection between the particular struggle for Negro equality and the general struggle for peace, democracy and the economic well-being of the whole American people. It relies upon the ever developing unity of the organizational strength of the Negro people. At the same time, it strives to effect durable bonds of unity with the broadest democratic forces, especially with the labor movement.

At its present level of development, the demands of the Negro people's movement are mainly those of a popular bourgeois-democratic class character. It is definitely anti-Dixiecrat and anti-McCarthy (i.e., anti-fascist); it is anti-colonial but not consistently anti-U.S. monopolist; it is increasingly anti-war and embodies multiplying elements of anti-imperialist consciousness; it is pro-labor and pro-liberal democratic in its electoral practice and political outlook.

The Negro people's movement encompasses the bulk of the mass organizations of the Negro people—economic, fraternal, political, religious and social—which are reflective of the complex of demands and interests of the several classes and class groupings in Negro life. It is not yet an organically united movement with an authoritative centralized leadership. However, at the hub, at the organizational axis of the Negro people's movement, is the NAACP, whose prestige, authority and network of organizations and complex of ties with all major organizations of the Negro people and its growing fraternal bonds with trade unions and the general liberal democratic forces of the country, serve to strengthen the united action of the Negro people and their allies and furthers the development of unity.

Within the united front of the Negro people's movement a process of constant ideological criticism and debate unfold about principled questions of policies and tactics concerning immediate objectives and long-range goals. The contending ideological trends, this inner struggle over leadership policies arise out of the very nature of the Negro people's united front which is necessarily composed of different class groupings who reflect different viewpoints based upon their respective class outlook and interests.

First, there are the leadership, policies and methods of struggle of the upper class groupings within the Negro movement. Their influence upon the leadership of this movement is dominant at the present time. As small capitalists, they have a capitalist outlook for the solution of the Negro question. They seek specific reform measures toward equal rights for the Negro people generally, through reliance on the self-interest of one sector of the dominant bourgeoisie against its more chauvinistic and avaricious partners.

While basing its policies upon collaboration with and appeal to the "liberal" bourgeoisie, the federal government and the courts, the Negro bourgeois forces in the Negro people's

movement, nonetheless, also maintain ties and alliances with the leaders of the trade union movement. This is possible because the Negro bourgeoisie is primarily non-monopoly and non-industrial small capitalists who employ few workers and whose economic base (or market) rests largely upon the purchasing power of the Negro wage workers of town and country who are in the employ of the white capitalists and landlords.

Secondly, the viewpoint and policies of the workers contend with those of the capitalists for leadership within the Negro people's movement. The urban working people constitute the bulk of the membership of the major organizations which compose the Negro people's movement. They represent a growing and organizationally integrated section of the general trade union movement, being 30 percent of the organized meat-packing workers, 25 percent of the coal miners, 15 percent of the membership of the auto and steel unions, etc.

As a consequence of Negro workers being organized into the general trade union movement there has been introduced into the Negro people's movement as major influences the ideological trends within the labor movement. The prestige of the Negro union leaders steadily mounts within the Negro people's movement. They bring to that movement the viewpoint, mass tactics and policies of the trade unions. They strive to have the Negro people's movement develop the struggle for equal rights on the basis, not only of internal unity, but on reliance on unity and alliance with the labor movement, especially of the trade union organizations of Negro and white workers.

The growing influence of the trade union leaders within the Negro people's movement makes for greater clarity as to the real class foe of Negro equality—the monopolists, the big capitalists and landlords. At the same time this trade union leadership brings not clarity alone, but also such views and policies which are representative of the prevailing level of ideological currents in the labor movement.

Thirdly, the special demands, viewpoint and leadership of those strata of the Negro people who are working farmers or farm workers (although represented programmaticly in the demands put forward by the Negro people's movement) are not yet felt as a major influence within the Negro people's movement. The Negro farmers have not yet established effective organization to wage the struggle for their economic demands. In the main their organizational affiliations are with those organizations which put to the fore the fight for the general democratic demands for equal rights for the Negro people, etc.

Fourthly, though they play a prominent leading role in the Negro people's movement at the present time, the Negro intellectuals do not represent an independent class grouping or homogeneous ideological viewpoint within the movement. The Negro intellectuals adopt the standpoint of one or another of the trends and currents emanating from the major class forces who contend for dominance within the Negro people's movement.

The Negro people's movement organizes the maximum political, economic and moral strength of the Negro masses and their white allies to bear upon the monopolist ruling circles, the government and upon public opinion in order to bring about basic improvements in the conditions of life of the Negro people in the U. S.; to secure equality and freedom from oppression, racist abuse and super-exploitation.

1. On the economic plane. It demands an end to all manner of discrimination against, and exclusion of, Negro men and women workers and professional people, from the industrial and business enterprises of the country, including employment training and promotion.

It demands the wiping out of all differentials in wages and job classification between Negro and white working people.

It seeks the complete organization of the remaining unorganized Negro workers of factory and farm into the general trade union movement on an integrated basis.

It supports the balanced in-

dustrialization of the South on the condition of full and equal rights of Negroes.

It supports legislative and economic measures and the struggle of the rural masses designed to bring an end to the semi-feudal plantation system and for such agrarian reforms as will insure land, credits, farm implements and decent housing to the landless and land poor tenants, sharecroppers, farm laborers and pauperized farmers.

It furthers the struggle for the equal rights of urban Negroes to all housing facilities at equal rental rates or purchase prices.

It supports all those general economic programs designed to improve the purchasing power and advance the living standards of the working people, poor farmers, professionals and small businessmen.

2. As regards political equality. It strives for the maximum mobilization of the Negro electorate for united political action in alliance and equitable coalition partnership with organized labor and broad progressive groupings of the electorate, in behalf of common democratic objectives which advance the interests of the masses in general and the freedom and equal rights goal of the Negro nationality in particular.

It seeks to secure to the Negro people maximum representation in elective and appointive public offices in governmental bodies at all levels.

(1) Towards this end, it seeks a democratic revision of jerry-mandered representative districts which arbitrarily maintain Negroes in a minority status in wards, state senatorial and assembly districts, and in Congressional Districts, thereby depriving them of opportunity of an equitable share of representation in the several levels of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of local, state and national government.

(2) Towards this end, it seeks the enactment of federal and state laws, judicial decisions, and executive orders to implement the enforcement of the constitutional pledge of universal suffrage. It demands federal action to guarantee to the disfranchised masses in the South their constitutional right to vote

and to exercise unfettered freedom of political action.

(3) Towards this end, it seeks to bring to bear the mobilized strength of the Negro people and their coalition partners upon the legislative, executive, administrative and judicial branches of the government—local, state and national—to secure the enactment of measures to wipe out the Jim Crow laws and to establish safeguards against the segregation of and discrimination against Negroes in every sphere of American life.

3. On the ideological plane. Side by side with the economic and political struggle the Negro people's movement wages an unremitting ideological struggle against the racist defamation of the Negro people. It fights the ideology of white supremacy and the myriad prejudicial customs and practices of the white chauvinist defenders of, and apologists for, the oppression of the Negro people.

Such are the basic programmatic objectives of the Negro people's movement at the present time.

The Communist Party considers the question of the freedom of the Negro people from all manner of oppression and the securing of their full and equal economic, political and social rights as American citizens, to be the key democratic task of our time and of the whole American people, the accomplishment of which is essential to the cause of social progress, democracy and socialism in our country.

The Communist Party views the Negro people's movement as a powerful democratic force in the social life of the country. It is at once a great independent force for the democratic and progressive development of the nation, and, simultaneously, an integral strategic part of the general popular coalition of labor and democratic forces in struggle for social progress and peace, against the forces of reaction and war.

The Communist Party supports this movement. The Communists take their place in this movement and selflessly strive for its upbuilding and success. In connection with the Negro people's movement, the Communists strive to:

1. Enlarge the organized strength of the Negro people's movement especially to further its growth in the working class districts of the cities and among the poor farmers and rural toilers;

2. Enhance its bonds and alliance with the labor movement and its ties with the general democratic and peace forces;

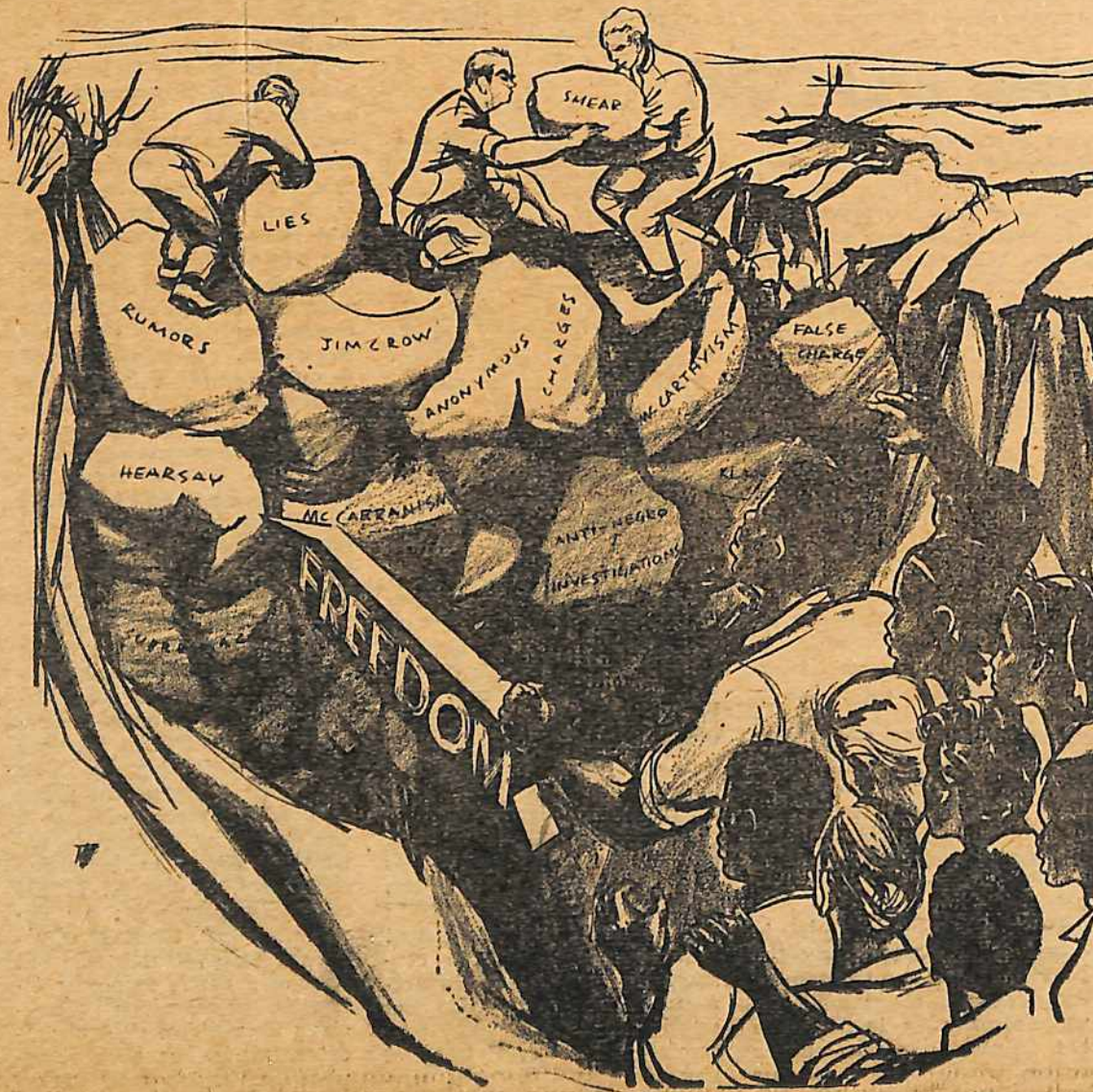
3. Support measures to strengthen its unity and effectiveness, to promote joint action and cement the unity between the associated independent organizations which together make up the Negro people's movement;

4. Promote the interests and policies of the workers within the united class front, to further the leading role of the Negro workers within the Negro people's movement;

5. Contribute to clarity concerning the identity of the true class enemy of Negro progress, that is, monopoly—the men of the trusts—the landlord capitalists. To diligently introduce greater consciousness of the objectively anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist direction in which the Negro people's movement must develop in order to attain the objectives of Negro equality and freedom;

6. Vigilantly and untiringly combat all manifestations of white supremacy racism, to place on the banners of the labor movement and rally the trade unions and all democratic forces to the above struggle against

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Some New Data Toward Understanding The Position of Negroes in the U.S. Today

By JAMES ALLEN

The main concern of the C.P. is to strengthen and advance the Negro rights movement, which has come forward so powerfully, and to strengthen and advance the coalition between this movement and labor in the interest of democracy, peace and socialism. These vital aims should be served by a reexamination of the theoretical position of the Party, in the light of the experiences of the past two decades and present trends.

Basically, the Communist position has changed little since 1930, when it characterized the Negro question as a national question and adopted the program of "self-determination for the Negro nation in the Black Belt." But it has been obvious for some time that a basic re-examination of this position is called for by important changes in the situation of the Negro people in this country, in the nature and form of the Negro right movement, and in its relation to the labor movement. Important world changes emerging from World War II, especially the successes of the independent movement in the colonial world, also affect the position.

The Communist position when it was adopted marked an important advance over existing approaches in the labor and progressive movements. Instead of the simple class approach, or the race approach, or the "class and caste" position—each in its time tending to obscure the real nature of the problem and hindering the coalition of the Negro people and the working class movement—the Communists recognized the national nature of the Negro question, defining the status of the Negro as that of an oppressed people striving for freedom. The question was thus raised to the very center of the fight for democratic advance along the road to socialism, with the most immediate implications for the fight for democracy in the South and for Negro-white unity in the labor movement. With the new approach, the Negro question in the United States was brought within the scope of

the world-wide national movements of oppressed peoples against imperialism in the present era, thus bringing to bear upon the question the rich experience and Marxist-Leninist theory in this field.

Despite the prevalent Leftist moods and interpretations of the time, which resulted in one-sided and distorted programmatic conclusions, the national theory led to a deeper understanding of the Negro question, making possible vital contributions to the struggle for Negro rights. The advances are lasting and durable, and continue to serve as the base for further progress in both theory and practice. These may be summarized as follows:

(1) The identification and definition of the plantation - cropping system as an economic remnant of slavery, semi-feudal in content, and as the source of the continued rule of white supremacy in the South, its continuing economic backwardness as a whole, and the oppression of the Negro people. This concept threw new light on historical development in the United States and upon struggles for Negro freedom in the entire period since the Civil War. It supplied specific, concrete meaning to the completion of the democratic revolution in the South, with its direct implications for democracy in the country as a whole. It revealed the struggle for Negro freedom throughout our history as being at the heart of the battle for democratic progress.

(2) The concept of strategic alliance between the working class and the oppressed Negro people was placed in a new and fruitful manner, which has constantly grown in importance. In the past, if this question was handled at all, it was in class terms only—as alliance between the workers, the poor and middle farmers, the urban middle classes. As a result of the national approach, the Negro people as a whole, in their fight for freedom, are seen as a permanent ally of the working class, at all stages and phases of the struggle along the road to so-

cialism. As recent developments and current events show, this concept of strategic alliance, if fully developed by labor in its battles against monopoly and reaction can become a powerful force for progress. Recognition of the national content of the Negro question, and of the powerful democratic drive imparted by the Negro freedom struggle, made possible this concept of strategic alliance.

(3) A basic, fuller, more fruitful understanding than at any previous time of the respective roles of white and Negro workers in the interests of working-class solidarity, of Negro-white unity, which proved its worth a hundred times over in growing Negro participation in the organized labor movement and in the Communist Party. The Communists, themselves setting the example, played a pioneer and vanguard role in recognizing the special problems and demands of the Negro people, and especially of the Negro worker, and by carrying on a constant fight against white chauvinist influences in their own ranks. The Communist initiative on these matters played an important role in organizing the Negro workers into the new industrial unions of the CIO, in this respect helping the labor movement overcome the great lag since World War I. The Communist approach, with its great emphasis upon Negro rights and demands and its insistence upon the white workers taking the initiative in the fight against race prejudice and Jimcrow practices, also helped the Negro worker overcome the anti-white and separatist moods and tendencies among his people, and to begin to look for working class leadership in the fight for Negro freedom. The greatest advances were made during the decade of the thirties, the years of great economic crisis and popular upheaval, when the Communists were widely recognized as pioneers and indefatigable fighters for Negro rights throughout the country. Without this leap forward in both theory and practice, the Communists could not have played the role they did,

helping open the door to the significant advances toward Negro freedom at that time and up to the present day. It is to the lasting credit of the Communist Party that it raised the Negro question to the center of attention nationally, projected it boldly into the labor movement, and made it a sensitive barometer of democratic progress in America.

(4) The concept of the Negro people as a nation, entitled to all the rights, dignity and status of a free people, with the right to determine their own destiny, was an inspiration to Negro and white alike, a ringing challenge to all forces of reaction that wanted to keep the "Negro in his place." No matter how sharp the differences with the Communists over their specific slogan of self-determination in the Black Belt, their great and constant emphasis upon the struggle for Negro rights, built a sense of achievement and confidence among the Negro people, and linked the attainment of full Negro freedom intimately with democratic progress in the country as a whole, and especially with the endeavors and aspirations of laboring people for a new, a socialist order of society.

These are the most important positive aspects of the Communist position as developed and maintained over the years, none of which should be deprecated and all of which should be retained and carried forward. The basic accomplishment in the theoretical approach, with its great practical contributions, was to place the Negro question in the context of the national question. This qualitative advance must be retained as the basis for the Communist position, as it is amended and adjusted in the light of experience.

What turned out to be wrong in the Communist position as previously developed? The basic weakness does not lie in the general idea of self-determination, a right which the Negro people are constantly in the process of trying to exercise. The basic weakness was in the programmatic conclusion, as summed up in the slogan of "the right of self-determination for the Negro people in the Black Belt." This proved to be erroneous because it projected only one course of self-determination, out of a number of possible ways, as the only solution of the Negro question. Actually, developments have shown that the national movement of the Negro people is not taking this course, that is, the attainment of full nationhood within the common territory of the old Black Belt, which was formed during the period of slavery. Objective, material conditions, as well as the course taken by the Negro freedom movement itself, project a solution along the lines of full and equal rights in all spheres, without first going through an intervening stage of full nationhood within a given common territory.

At this point it should be made clear that the Leninist approach to the national question never set up a contradiction between integration and the right of self-determination. The ultimate aim is integration. Due to historic circumstances which have led to the oppression of one people by another, to national enmities, to big-nation chauvinism, to distrust of the oppressing people by the oppressed people, the stage of national freedom—that is, the full right of a nation to choose integration or separation by exercising the political right of self-determination—has been recognized by Marxists as a historical necessity. The real problem we

AUTHOR'S NOTE

(Author's Note: The following remarks are directed toward a re-examination of our theoretical position on the Negro question. They do not pretend to present a complete discussion of the question. They center on what I think is pertinent to both a critique of our previous position and the attempt to redefine our position today. The conclusions contained here about changes in the Black Belt and the South are based upon results of a new study which I summarized and submitted in a memorandum dated September 10, 1954, urging a complete re-examination of our position in the light of historic trends and current developments. The last section of the following comments is not an attempt to define a complete position, but only presents the points that seem to me most important, that need to be emphasized, in formulating our position today.)

face in this respect is whether the circumstances are such in this country as to warrant the perspective of a Negro nation in the Black Belt seeking to exercise this right politically, that is, through first attaining some form of state entity, on the basis of which the right of self-determination can be exercised. While certain elements of this type of development have always been present, and still persist, the main long-range historic tendency has been and is toward a direct process of integration. This does not mean that integration has been won or assured anywhere in the U.S.; the battle for equal rights, which has become so intensive and widespread, characterizes the present stage of the struggle, which has integration as its aim, that is, the attainment of a completely unsegregated status everywhere, a status in which the enjoyment of all economic, social and political rights in no longer placed in question in any way. The struggle for democracy in the South, and especially for the super-oppressed Negro people in the South, remains decisive for the attainment of this goal. And the attainment of political rights by the Negroes in the Black Belt majority areas will create new pivots of political power for the Negro people nationally; moreover, certain political autonomies for the Negro people may emerge within the Southern states where such majority areas exist. However, the overall development indicates that the Black Belt will not serve as a base for national self-determination in the sense in which our previous program envisioned.

The most important material, objective factors which affect this course of development are: (1) Periodic mass migrations out of the Black Belt, since the era of World War I, into the industrial areas mostly in non-southern regions but also in the non-Black Belt South, have brought about a significant change in the geographical distribution and class composition of the Negro people. Today, almost 40 percent of the Negro people live in non-southern areas (outside the 12 states through which the old Black Belt runs), as compared with 15 percent 50 years ago, while less than one-third live in the old Black Belt area as compared with more than half at the beginning of the century. (2) This shift of population geographically has at the same time been a shift from rural into urban centers, from agriculture into industry. In 1900 only one-fourth of the Negro people lived in urban centers, but by 1950 the proportion had grown to 61 percent, which approached the same level as for the white population (64 percent). Today there are per-

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COMMUNIST - NEGRO RELATIONS

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segregation and discrimination of Negroes and for the democratic demands for equal rights and freedom of the Negro people.

7. The Communist Party sets for itself the highest standards of brotherly relations between its Negro and white members. Within its organization there can exist no toleration of race prejudice and no quota barriers to the fullest participation and integration of Negro Communists in all levels of Party leadership and in all aspects of its work. The deliberate manifestation of anti-Negro bias or racial prejudice is incompatible with membership in the Communist Party.

8. The Communists bring to the Negro people's freedom struggle their dedicated devotion to the cause of the happiness and liberation of mankind from all exploitation and oppression; their socialist ideals and objectives; their knowledge of the generalized experiences of mankind's historic freedom struggle, the methodology and compass of Marxist social science.

9. There is no greater immediate task for the Communists and advanced workers to fulfill in connection with the working class than that of furthering the bonds of class unity and brotherhood between Negro and white workers. At all times Commu-

nists must stand in the forefront of the struggle to smash every remaining color bar and anti-Negro prejudice, practice, or manifestation of racial prejudice in the trade union and other working class organizations. Communists must always stand forth as tireless fighters for the integration of Negro workers on the basis of full equality in the life and affairs of the trade unions. Communists must ceaselessly work to influence the trade unions to struggle for full equality in job rights in all branches of industry for the Negro workers—in terms of employment, equal pay for equal work, job classification, upgrading, training, and promotion; to put an end to all racial exclusiveness in the employment and job classification practices in the industries and enterprises. Communists must be outstanding in influencing and sharing in the completion of the urgent work of the labor movement to organize the millions of unorganized Negro and white workers—particularly in the South—into the trade unions.

Communists must be tireless in organizing and stimulating the labor movement and the popular organizations of dominantly white membership, to champion the freedom demands of the Negro people and to render every material and moral sup-

port to the concrete struggles of the Negro people for political, economic and social equality and freedom from national oppression, segregation, disfranchisement and discrimination.

The struggle of the Negro people for equality is an organic part of the democratic struggle of the exploited classes and oppressed peoples on a national and world-wide scale. It is a separate sector but an indivisible part of the struggle of the working people of our country and the world for security, peace, democracy and freedom. Whatever affects the fortunes of one sector, has its consequences upon the whole front. Correspondingly in so far as progress is achieved in the general cause of the struggle for democracy, peace and economic well-being in the country as a whole (as well as on a world scale) to just such an extent will more opportune conditions be created for favoring the triumph of the struggle of the Negro people for equality of rights and people's freedom. The opposite is no less true, therefore, Communists in the Negro freedom movement strive to strengthen the conscious participation of that movement with the nationwide and world struggle for peace, economic well-being and freedom, and against war, fascism, poverty and colonial bondage.

Some New Data Toward Understanding The Position of Negroes in the U.S. Today

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haps 2,000,000 Negro workers in the trade unions. (3) Economic changes in the South (especially the shift of the cotton crop westward, the growth of capitalist farming, the growth of mechanization in agriculture, and industrialization) have weakened and reduced the role of the plantation-cropping system, the chief retarding force with respect to Negro advance and also with respect to progress and democracy in the South as a whole. The sharp drop of Negro tenant and cropper families in the Black Belt by almost half (from 500,000 to 280,000) between 1930 and 1950 indicates a corresponding decline in the old-style plantation, while crops other than cotton and tobacco grown on non-plantation type farms have become more important. Cotton has ceased to be king in the old South.

These shifts and changes must also be seen in their various aspects. The mass migrations out of the Black Belt and the shift from agriculture into industry greatly increased the size of the Negro working class and brought large masses of Negro workers into the labor movement, thus broadening the ground for Negro-white unity and working class solidarity. This is the most powerful factor making for integration, and is at the base of the great upsurge of the movement for Negro rights. But the Negro workers, as well as the growing Negro middle classes in the urban centers, despite significant progress in these respects, are victimized and discriminated against, economically, socially and politically. The continuing ideology and practices of white supremacy, although tending to assume less direct and obnoxious forms in the North, still permeate many sectors of the population, including the labor movement itself, not only as a hangover from the past, but as a product of imperialism in general and more specifically as an outgrowth of the special oppression of the Negro in the South.

The declining role of the plantation-cropping system, and other economic changes in the South, have resulted in the further disintegration of the old Black Belt as the area of Negro majority, therefore weakening the forces retarding Negro advance and southern progress. But five million Negroes still live in the old Black Belt majority area, about 45 percent of the population there, half of all farm operators, and 70 percent of all tenants and croppers. Despite both the absolute and relative decline of the old-style plantation, and despite certain adjustments of the system, it remains as a putrid, decadent force, still essentially accounting for the Negro concentrations in the old Black Belt areas, which remain predominantly rural and are still characterized by semi-feudal, oppressive relations, at the lowest economic level in the nation.

It would therefore be erroneous to come to the conclusion that the processes of economic and social change have in fact altered the nature of the Negro question by removing the basis of the American economic and social order for the oppression of the Negro people. If this were the case, there would be no necessity for the struggle against the oppression of the Negro people, as a pressing and special problem of the fight for democratic progress and socialism. That was the basic mistake made during the period when Browderism was dominant in the Communist Party, when it was said that the right of self-determination had already been

won and exercised along the road of integration into American life. This is the battle that still has to be won, by constant struggle against the innumerable discriminations which actually exist in all phases of life, and in the South by uprooting feudal remnants embodied in the plantation-cropping system and all its ideological, social and political offshoots, as the indispensable core of the fight for democracy. Thus, the Negro question remains national in content, since it involves the oppression of an entire people by a dominant nation, an oppression which is characteristically imperialist and from which the monopoly-planter ruling classes are able to garnish profits over and above those resulting from the exploitation of the white working people. The fight against this national oppression involves basic social changes in the South which will lead to the completion of the democratic revolution, started by the Civil War and carried forward by Reconstruction, until its defeat in 1877. Specifically, this means the elimination of plantation-cropping as a semi-feudal left-over from slavery, which today continues to serve as the base for the planter-Dixiecrat political power, allied with monopoly capital. It means the attainment for the Negro in the South of all the democratic rights guaranteed by the Constitution for all American citizens, and of equal rights everywhere, on a non-segregated basis, for jobs, economic advancement, education, and all social and political privileges.

The mistake made by the Communists in the 1930's was to assume that the struggle for full equal rights, that the fight against national oppression of the Negro, would take the classic road of the formation of a nation in the area of Negro majority. This position was modified somewhat in the Resolution on the Negro Question in 1946, after the reconstitution of the Communist Party. The Resolution (a) rejected the previous perspective of a Negro Black Belt state; (b) recognizing what

had long been true in practice, it placed the question of self-determination in the Black Belt as an ultimate program as distinguished from the immediate program, and also left open the form in which self-determination in the Black Belt would be realized, to be determined on the basis of future development; and (c) placed major emphasis, in the immediate stage, upon the fight for equal rights and for fully representative government. These modifications were important, in the sense that they discarded or subordinated some of the most incongruous and "Leftist" aspects of the program, although retaining the same central programmatic approach. Thus, as the Communist position stood in 1946, it was still based upon the perspective of the Negro people in the Black Belt developing in the direction of full nationhood, with the solution to be found in the realization of the right of self-determination of the Negro nation in this area. No official change has been made in this position since 1946.

Why did the Communist Party fail to re-examine this position and change it, in the face of important developments which moved in another direction, although there were strong pressures within its own ranks to make such a change? In part, this may be explained by the fact that Browder revisionism, with its repudiation of the national content of the Negro question, and the resulting "downgrading" of the question, aroused a strong opposition in the ranks of the Communists to any basic change from the pre-Browder position, and resulted in the 1946 Resolution making changes only of a partial and transitory character. But it is necessary to examine more deeply the roots of this inflexibility in the face of real developments which brought into question the correctness of the position.

The most important weaknesses may be summarized as follows:

(1) A mechanical, inflexible and unhistoric approach to both

the theory of the nation and to the national program. Stalin's definition of a nation, in itself a good one with general validity, was accepted without a full appreciation of the specific characteristics of the development of the Negro people in the United States. This was felt in the failure to recognize that the elements of nationhood vary greatly in relative importance from one people to another, depending upon the specific circumstances of their history. Thus, with respect to the Negro people in the United States certain factors favor the process of direct integration rather than a line of development toward Negro nationhood, distinct from the American nation as a whole. The contradictory nature of this phenomenon can be seen especially with respect to the element of common territory, the Black Belt of the South, which the Communists considered the "homeland" of the Negro nation, and the guarantee of an indispensable base upon which all the other elements of nationhood would mature, and in their sum lead to the emergence of a free Negro nation within the United States. But since the Black Belt, the historic area of plantation-sharecropping and Negro majority, existed within the United States rather than as a colonial possession, it was directly subjected to the forces of capitalist development of great expansionist power, which has lasted well into the era of monopoly and imperialism. The remnants of slavery were powerful enough to keep this semi-feudal area almost intact for a half century after the overthrow of slavery, against all kinds of opposing pressures, because capitalism found sufficient resources of wealth and manpower outside the Old South to assure its rapid development. Subsequently, however, the Negro land worker in the South became an important source of manpower for industry, and industrial expansion began to affect the South itself more directly. The importance of these factors, at work over an historic period, can be now seen more clearly.

In other countries of a colonial or dependent kind, internal capitalist development and imperialist oppression from the outside resulted in the emergence of national movements leading to independence. But in this country the expansion of capitalism, continuing well into the present era of monopoly, has had the effect of partially disintegrating the Black Belt and its semi-feudal economy, preventing the development toward a common economic life for the area, and drawing ever larger numbers of Negroes out of the potential national territory. The result is that the Negro national movement has developed along other lines, predominantly in the direction of seeking a direct integrationist solution.

Other elements of Negro nationality have also favored this development. No differences of language set the white and Negro apart; and both share common traits of history and culture, although distinct qualities also exist. On the other hand, the principal obstacles to integration are the still persistent feudal remnants in the South, and the white supremacy ideology, fed by the unmoded plantation system and by imperialism.

Separatism has also been nourished by the race factor, which has served to identify the Negro as an oppressed people. Among whites, racial prejudice has hindered and obstructed working class solidarity and unity between white and Negro in all phases of community life. Among Negroes, the race factor has strengthened the sense of identity as a people and their solidarity as a people against all forms of discrimination. While also participating in common endeavors with whites, the Negro people have tended more and more to strengthen their own organizations, and to build up their own forces in the struggle for freedom. The struggle for full rights and equality has therefore taken on a national form, in the sense that the Negro fights as a people, seeking special guarantees inside and outside of government that his rights, once granted, are fully respected and protected. Essentially, the Negro freedom struggle has not been based upon seeking these guarantees in nationhood within the Black Belt, although the struggle for democracy in the South has always been basic. These guarantees have been sought within the framework of present constitutional rights and state structures.

The failure to give due weight to these specific features led the Communists to apply the principle of self-determination mechanically, and therefore incorrectly, to a situation that did not warrant it.

(2) An incorrect approach toward the possibility of continuing capitalist expansion within the United States under conditions of the general crisis of capitalism played a very important role in the formulation of the Communist position on the Negro question. This position was established and developed during the great economic crisis of the 1930's. At that time Marxists generally shared the view that capitalism would never again go through a significant period of expansion, that the recovery from the economic crisis was of a "special kind" which precluded a return to the level of 1929. In this view, American capitalism had entered upon a period of more or less continuous long-range decline. Therefore it was assumed that existing economic relations as they affected the Negro people would remain more or less the same. From this is was concluded that the relative position of the Black Belt as of that time would continue indefinitely, with little change in its internal structure, with no further mass migration out of it into industry, with the prospect that this would lead to the deepening of

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CIVIL RIGHTS
LEGISLATION

'Melting Pot' Theory Doesn't Work; National Group Work Lacks Scope

BY A NATIONAL GROUP WORKER

IN THESE United States, 45,000,000 people, or over 25 percent of the population, belong to national groups. Immigrants and their children comprise the majority of the population of great cities like New York and basic sections of the workers in key industries in Chicago, Detroit, etc.

Take a look at New York, where 2,500,000 foreign-born live. You have about two million Irish, two million Italians, two million Jews, 500,000 Negroes, 500,000 Puerto Ricans and other smaller groups (Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Hungarians, etc.). In New York one out of every four reads a foreign-language newspaper.

There are thousands of national group organizations, with millions of members. There are also many national group labor committees and clubs (e.g., the Jewish Labor Committee with about 500,000 members). Here are some vital factors:

1) The majority of the national groups are in auto, steel and other basic industries.

2) While the national groups are shrinking, they are still large enough to swing weight in an election, especially in the eastern states. In 158 out of 435 congressional districts in the country (mainly in big cities) there are 25 percent or more first- and second-generation Americans. These districts are represented by 76 Democrats and 82 Republicans in the House of Representatives in 1956. Their strategic location gives the national groups political power. One bourgeois politician said: "They can swing big cities like New York and Chicago that swing big states that swing the Presidential elections."

3) The combined circulation of the national group progressive press is many times greater than the Daily Worker. In other words, you have here many thousands of workers sympathetic to socialism, but not members of the Communist Party or the Socialist Party.

4) In the national group, as a result of the disintegration of the colonial system, there is today an ever-growing and anti-imperialist feeling. Also, in those groups connected with the socialist countries there is an increasing sentiment of solidarity and hostility towards the cold war directed against their motherlands. On the other hand, the rise of the fascist danger in the U.S.A. has led to the sharpening of nationalist and racist suppression of the rights of minorities. **PRACTICALLY LIQUIDATED**

What is the situation with our national group work?

During the last five years our national group work was practically liquidated. National group commissions fell apart or are just not functioning. Progressive papers folded up, others are bleeding to death from a sharp drop in circulation, while some have increased their circulation.

What are the main reasons?

1) The large-scale deportation drive and the McCarthyite hysteria.

2) The complete abandonment of this field by the national and state leaderships. Year in and year out a number of national group commissions fought to re-establish contact with the Party. Only this year some half-measures were taken: a few comrades were assigned, but they appeared and disappeared like comets, transferred to other "more important" fields. The na-

tional groups aren't even mentioned in the Dennis and Schrank reports. And of course, they are not the concern of trade union sections comprised almost exclusively of national groups. The Daily Worker and Worker simply ignore the national groups. For example: the DW didn't even report about certain deportation cases, while other non-Marxist papers did.

3) The existence of strong "left" sectarianism in the national groups, expressed as follows: a) Overemphasis of left centers, which became the substitute for work in the mass organizations, the unions and the Party. Thus, it was impossible not to get isolated from the national group workers and their allies. This also led to the liquidation of the Party's vanguard role and the Party itself. This is a main factor for the appearance of bureaucratic methods of leadership on the part of the commissions. And naturally the left centers became ghost centers. b) The almost exclusive concentration of work among the foreign-born and the abandonment of the native-born. c) The "old country first" theory which reflects the

tendency existing among the old immigrants, who came here "temporarily." This led to a gross underestimation of the American people's life and struggle, of which the national groups are part and parcel.

Why were the national groups abandoned completely?

Is it because of the "difficult objective situation?" That, of course, is one reason. But to present this as the sole reason means accepting the inevitability of a panicky retreat—an underestimation of the people's democratic strength.

Is it because the national groups have already been swallowed up by the "melting pot" of "100 percent Americanism?" To agree to this would be outright nonsense.

The national groups, while shrinking in size, are here to stay for quite a long time. They still are special groups of Americans, united by distant national characteristics (language, traditions, culture, religion, customs, and mixed national psychological make-up). On this basis a rich national group life and activities have been developed. Newspapers, theatres, television

shows, literature, schools, all kind of organizations with millions of members, nationality group committees and clubs in the labor movement, etc.

NEW CHARACTERISTICS

But the national groups have developed new characteristics. No longer does the first "foreign-language" generation predominate. The feeling of being temporarily in the U.S.A. has largely receded. The English-language press of the national groups is expanding. Native-born are being elevated to leadership in organizations. They tend to unite their forces to survive as national groups. The McCarranite nationalist and racist attacks have increased the tendency towards unity among and within each group. The conservative-led organizations participate more and more in the struggle for equal rights, political representation, cultural survival and against colonialism. These are not signs of death.

In our Party the national question in the U.S.A. was restricted to the Negro nation in the Black Belt and the Mexican and Puerto Rican minorities.

This led to discarding the national groups (Italians, Poles, Irish, etc.) since they are another form of the national question, different from the Negro nation, different from the Mexican and Puerto Rican national minorities.

This is a bourgeois nationalist position. It takes for granted that the national groups have already died out. It is an expression of the "melting pot" theory that still influences large segments of our Party. This is alien to Marxism-Leninism. So is the position that many of our comrades in the national groups take: the building of an artificial Chinese wall between their group and the struggles of the American people.

To revive our work among the national groups I propose:

1) That we broaden our scope on the national question in the U.S.A. and include the national groups. This should be included in the draft resolution.

2) National groups commissions should be represented in the Party Convention.

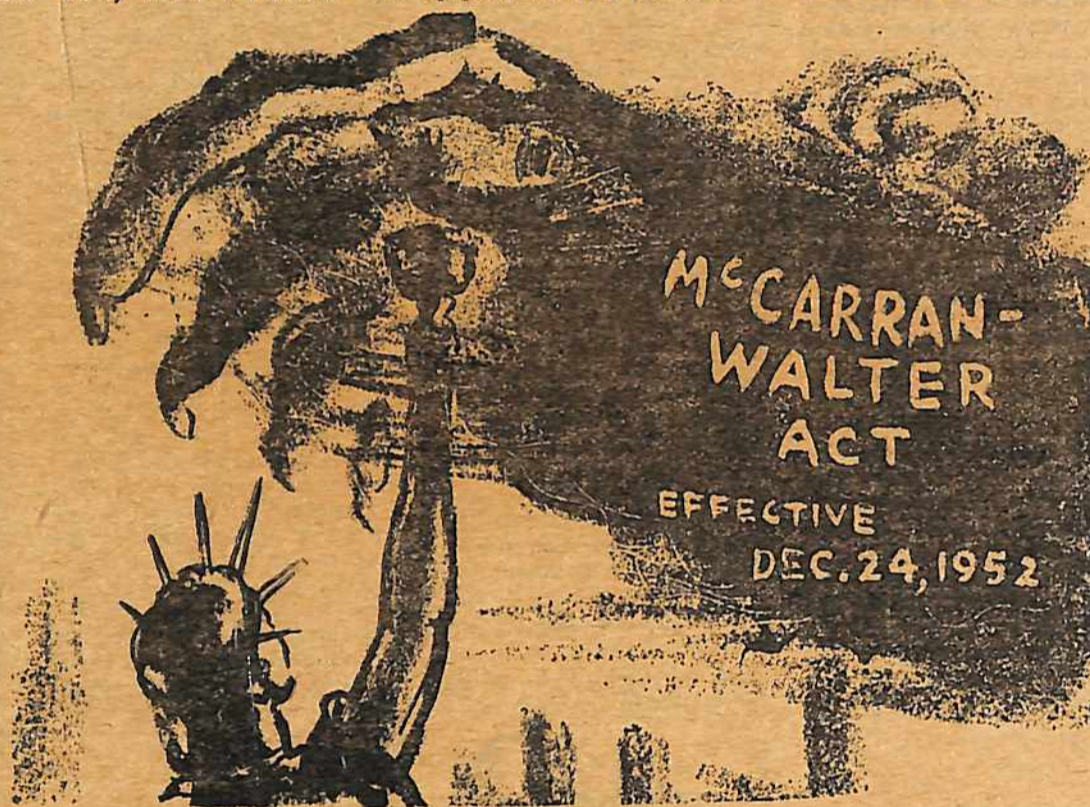
3) Establish new commissions. Clarify their role. Strengthen the existing commissions by shifting the main emphasis in their composition from the left centers and papers towards the trade unions, mass organizations and native-born. Establish a National Groups Commission of the National Committee.

4) Industrial sections must assign comrades for national group work. State and County committees should establish national group sections and branches.

5) The Marxist press should discover the national groups and minorities.

6) End the one-sided evolution of cadres in the Party. Draw boldly new cadres from national groups.

7) We must see, above everything else, that national group work is an important auxiliary means of an effective industrial concentration policy, a means to improve the CLASS composition of the Party. Today's composition—mainly middle class—is a deadly danger to the Party, the main source of "left" and right opportunism, a fountain of factionalism, the main cause (in the last analysis) of our isolation from the working class and the poor farmers.



New Data on Negro Question

(Continued from Page 11)

all contradictions within it. The theoretical conclusion from this was that the Negro nationhood would mature in the Black Belt, and would result in a national movement along the classic model. Despite the war-inspired expansion, which accentuates all the trends toward disintegration of the Black Belt, the old view persisted even after the war, when the decline in production due to reconversion from a war to a peacetime economy was erroneously interpreted by many as the resumption of long-range economic decline, and therefore affected the 1945 Resolution.

This, of course, does not mean that economic crises of severity will not recur, with the effect of retarding and even reversing for a time the trends which are altering the relative position of the Black Belt. But the actual changes that have taken place in the status of the Negro people as a result of the economic development in the South and in the country as a whole have shown that the perspective of a maturing Negro nation in the Black Belt was incorrect.

As a result of these mistaken approaches the Communist Party

got fixed into immutable positions, not in accordance with reality. This is a basic reason, together with generally prevailing Left sectarianism, that the Party was unable to adjust to the new upsurge in the Negro freedom movement in the postwar period, and played a relatively unimportant role in it.

NOTES FOR THE DEFINITION OF THE PRESENT POSITION

The position of the Negro people can be defined as that of an oppressed racial-national minority, or, as Comrade Jackson puts it, as a racially distinct oppressed nationality. This recognizes the national content of the question, which has been established during the course of historic development in this country (slavery, the remnants of slavery, the incompleteness of the democratic revolution in the South, the persistence of the retarding semi-feudal and oppressive factors during the entire period of inner capitalist expansion in the period of imperialism). It also recognizes the special racial factor. As expressed in white chauvinism, this has sharpened the oppressive discrimination against the

Negro people, and prolonged it even as the objective factors giving rise to it have weakened. On the part of the Negro people, the racial factor has deepened and prolonged their sense of identification as a people, subject to the same discriminations on account of color.

The characterization of the Negro people as an oppressed racial-national minority (or nationality) also distinguishes their position from that of other minorities within the country, such as the foreign-born and Jewish people, historically as well as in the present, for the evolution of the latter groups has always been along the lines of integration into the American nation as a whole, although certain chauvinistic attitudes, on the one hand, and nationality-type characteristics, on the other, persist.

The obstacles which have stood in the way of the integration of the Negro into the American nation are precisely those associated with national oppression, and with the white chauvinism arising primarily from the specific conditions of national oppression are not merely ideological remnants of the past but are

the concrete, persisting remnants of slavery in the form of the plantation-cropping system in the South, which, together with all its offshoots, has been the chief barrier to Negro integration into the American nation as a whole as well as to the progress of the South.

The battle for democracy in the South, the completion of the tasks of the democratic revolution left unfinished by Civil War and Reconstruction, therefore play a pivotal role in the freedom struggle of the Negro people.

With respect to long-term trends, the most important is the movement of the Negro people towards full equality on the basis of integration into all aspects of American life. This is sustained by material, objective factors of change in the South as well as by the various subjective factors, which are expressed primarily in the greatly expanded base for Negro-white working class solidarity and in the integrationist programs put forth by the Negro freedom movement itself.

Because of the specific features of the national oppression of the Negro people the development toward integration is not taking place along the same lines as for the other nationality groups within the country. The

(Continued on Page 16)

Rejection Political Action Association

(Continued from Page 3)

own where those of the Labor Party are unsatisfactory or non-existent. This disposes effectively of the Gates argument that we cannot function as a political party because we face a two-party system in this country, for Great Britain also has such a system. That the British Party's policy is effective is attested to by the fact that the Party, although relatively small, has won for itself a large following in the trade unions, Labor Party and cooperative movements. In trade union congresses Left-progressive strength runs to one-third or more of the total vote cast. With a similar policy in this country we can also build up a strong Communist Party and an extensive mass following. We must not abandon our election rights, but fight for them. Some comrades in an attempt to get around this decisive objection, argue that the new organization would also be able to put up independent candidates. This is not so, but even if it were what then would be the sense of the whole change?

e) It would alienate us from other left forces in the United States: Traditionally, American left wing groups follow the practice of organizing independent parties and of putting up candidates outside the scope of the two-party system. Consequently, the proposed political action association, which few if any of them would endorse, could only serve to drive another wedge between us and these groups. It is simply absurd to state, as Comrade Gates does in his article, that such an organization as he proposes would be an important step in the direction of the eventual coming together of the left groups in a general party of Socialism. Just the reverse is the truth.

f) It would weaken our bonds of international solidarity: One of the most striking characteristic of the Gates movement for dissolving the Communist Party into a political action association is its definite weakening of international conceptions of solidarity and its almost complete focussing upon the American

scene. One of the main manifestations of this trend is the development in the recent period of definitely anti-Soviet trends in their ranks.

g) The new organization would be revisionist: In his article Comrade Gates says that "our big mistake under Browder was not the formation of the Communist Political Association, but the wrong content we put into it." But this is untrue. Browder's ideological revisionism and his organized C. P. A. constituted one harmonious whole, both phases of which, the organizational and the political, were opportunist. And the same would also be true of Gates' political action association.

During the past several months there has been strong Right tendency, headed by Comrade Gates, growing in our Party. As expressed in its various writings and speeches, the concept of the general crisis of world capitalism fades away, especially with regard to the United States; the prospect for an eventual economic slump in this country virtually vanishes; the vanguard role of the Communist Party is repudiated as a matter of principle; the non-inevitability of war is largely looked upon as a sort of automatic process, rather than as a result of the world's workers' relentless struggle for peace; the parliamentary road to Socialism is presented incorrectly in a non-struggle sense; our recent proposal that we restate the general interpretation of the Marxist principle of absolute impoverishment of the workers is already being used in an opportunist manner; the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat weakens into an evolving bourgeois democracy; there is a virtual acceptance of the bourgeois theory of American exceptionalism; there is persistent sniping at the USSR and its leaders, which went so far in the Hungarian crisis as to denounce the latter as enemies of Socialism, both within and without the Soviet Union; by open demands for the dissolution of the Communist Party; by tendencies to tail after the conservative trade union

leaders uncritically; to dismiss class collaboration in the labor movement literally as of no serious consequence, instead of the real danger that it is; and the systematic campaign that is being carried on to condemn Marxist-Leninism as Left-sectarianism and to de-Leninize our Party, a process which is already dangerously advanced.

These are Right wing trends and policies, and beyond doubt they are the ones that, in substance, would be written into the proposed political action association. From whichever angle it is looked at, the new organization would be a big step backward for our Party, and it would be hailed by all enemy forces. If in the Party's eagerness to find a way out of its present serious difficulties, it should be so unwary as to grasp at the straw of the suggested political action association, it would do itself irreparable harm. This time there will be no Duclos article to bail us out of our folly. To make the same basic mistake twice would be unthinkable. The Party's life is now at stake.

What, then, should the Party do to meet its difficulties? The answer to this pertinent question can only be that we must go ahead building the Communist Party, essentially as the workers in every other important country in the world are doing. But we must do this in a new way, as has been made very clear in the current long and stormy Party discussion. Among the basic lessons we must learn and apply are that, imperatively, we must have more democracy and less bureaucracy in the Party; we must display more theoretical initiative and fight against every form of dogmatism and doctrinairism in this vital field; we must develop more comradely critical relations with other Communist parties and with the Socialist countries; we must, while concentrating fundamentally upon American conditions, not neglect our basic international tasks; we must war relentlessly against our traditional weakness, left-sectarianism, while at the same time combatting the Right danger which has suddenly sprung up and which is now threatening the life of our Party; and we must systematically eradicate every trace of the Stalin cult of the individual from our ranks.

Above all, we must realize that the workers' great science of Marxism-Leninism is far more flexible and generally more capable of meeting our present problems than the makeshift Right theories of revisionism now running rife in our Party. We must defeat the naive idea that we can solve our problems by throwing our Party out of the window and Marxism-Leninism with it and by adopting a crudely improvised political action association. We must repel all the current attacks against Marxism-Leninism and also correct the serious errors in the Resolution in this respect, particularly its making conditional the Party's endorsement of Marxism-Leninism.

World Socialism is now rapidly overtaking and surpassing world capitalism in every vital field. This reality enormously favors the struggle of the work-



ers in all countries, including ours. It also calls for greater flexibility in their class struggle strategies and tactics. We must not conclude, however, that because in recent years world Socialism has become so powerful that, therefore, the world battle for Socialism is virtually won. International capitalism is still very strong and there is yet much fight left in it, especially in the powerful section of it located in the United States. Consequently, we must orientate upon the perspective of sharp national and international class struggles ahead of us, even within the framework of international peaceful co-existence. The period before us will be one of intense struggle—among other things, the current serious crisis in the Middle East should teach us this. Hence, in order to play our part in the national and international class and anti-imperialist struggle, we imperatively need a strong Communist Party, firmly based upon the principles of Marxism-Leninism. This is the basic reason, too, why we should categorically reject the Gates proposal for a shapeless political action association, with an essentially opportunist political program.

The Communist Party, USA, has a fighting record of which it may well be proud. For almost four decades it has stood in the very forefront of the American class struggle, truly a vanguard party, and it has made innumerable contributions to the struggle of the working class and the Negro people. Not the least of this splendid record was the Party's recent heroic and essentially correct fight against the grave danger of war as a result of the aggressive, world-conquest policies of Wall Street imperialism. It is a shame and disgrace the way the Party has been unmercifully slandered, abused and misrepresented during recent months right in our own Party. Such a campaign of systematic belittlement and attack against the very existence of the Party can only be understood in the sense of so much preparation to shove our Party far to the Right and eventually to liquidate it into such an organization as the political action association. The membership must not allow this disgraceful and deadly campaign to succeed. We must rally to save the Communist Party.

Our Party is now seriously weakened, and its legal status damaged, from a combination of negative circumstances. First and foremost was the long and bitter attack upon our Party by the government, with its jailing of leaders, deportation of left workers, denial of civil rights, and all the rest of the terrorist pro-fascist, pro-war campaign. Serious leftist errors by our leaders, basically caused by the hard situation, also played an important part. Then there has been the great shock of the Stalin revelations and the tragic events in Hungary. A basic factor, too, in causing our relative isolation are the prosperity conditions and illusions among the workers, bred of 15 years of capitalist boom. And not the least of these negative factors has been the bitter campaigns of liquidationism

carried on within the Party under the alleged pretense of frank self-criticism. But we must not be dismayed and demoralized by these difficulties and be stampeded into the false hope of a political action association. Other Communist parties have suffered far greater losses than we have in their struggle in other years; but by standing firmly on their Marxist-Leninist principles, they have overcome their losses and marched on to great successes. In fact, this is true of all major Communist parties, without exception. We, too, must stand true to these great principles and traditions and not flee in confusion, as we would do were we to accept the proposed political action association. This would be an impermissible ideological and organizational surrender to American imperialism. We would be saying that there is no place for a Communist Party in the United States, the greatest country of world capitalism.

Despite the present sharpening of conditions internationally the fighting situation of the workers on a world scale is highly favorable, and getting more so constantly. The same is true within the United States, with the working class and the Negro people displaying more and more political activity. The signal, therefore, is for us to build our Communist Party and to plunge it into mass activity on every front. If we will do this, the way we will recover lost ground will surprise the pessimists. This is a great testing time for American Communists, when the Marxists-Leninists must stand up and be counted. As for myself, I have no doubts as to how our Party will respond in this crisis. Our convention will show that we have not studied and experienced Marxism-Leninism for almost 40 years for nothing.

Resolution by Auto Workers in Detroit

WHEREAS this conference of all the auto worker sections of Detroit, held at the end of September, reflects the thinking and experience gained through long years of leadership and struggle in this basic industry, and

WHEREAS we feel that the thinking and opinions of this conference should be recorded and made known because of the special importance and role of the industrial worker in the party and in the present discussion, and

WHEREAS this conference showed a complete agreement on the following points:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That there can be no question as to the continued existence of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. as a political party, basing itself on Marxism-Leninism as applied to the American scene, and it be emphasized that our mistakes stem from a superficial understanding and application of these principles, rather than from a weakness in the principles themselves;

2. That we reaffirm democratic centralism as the basic rule of our Party, that in supporting democratic centralism we emphasize (a) That all our experience as militant class-conscious workers convinces us that without democratic centralism we could not continue to exist as a fighting organization; (b) that the present breakdown of democratic centralism had its beginnings in Party practices that existed long before the recent anti-Party persecution; (c) that the relationship between industrial workers and leadership must be completely overhauled so that the knowledge, experience and thinking of the industrial clubs actually go into the making of party policy; (d) that the problem of bureaucracy in our Party be studied in the light of the above, and that we use the CP of China as an example in developing organizational measures to combat this bureaucracy, and strengthening inner party democracy;

3. That the industrial clubs and sections in our Party be continued and strengthened; that while this form of organization poses many problems requiring solution, yet all our experience proves that it is the only form through which the Party can carry out its role among industrial workers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent through our District to the National Committee for their consideration.



By SAUL WELLMAN

DETROIT, Mich.

(From a report to the Michigan State Committee C. P.)

The Left-Center leadership coalition led by the UAW from 1939 to 1947. After 1947, there came into being in its place a diverse coalition of rightwing Socialists, conservatives and business trade unionists, under Reuther's leadership. The main factor which brought them together was their desire for control and their instrument was "anti-Communism."

To understand the defeat in 1947, it is necessary to go back and briefly examine the wartime relationship of forces and developments which influenced the UAW then.

In the key locals a contest for power raged between two coalitions. The Left-Center coalition led by Addes-Thomas-Leonard, supporting the CIO Left-Center Coalition headed by Murray, was opposed by the rightist coalition, headed by the former Left-Winger, Walter Reuther. Both coalitions had diverse ideological groupings within them.

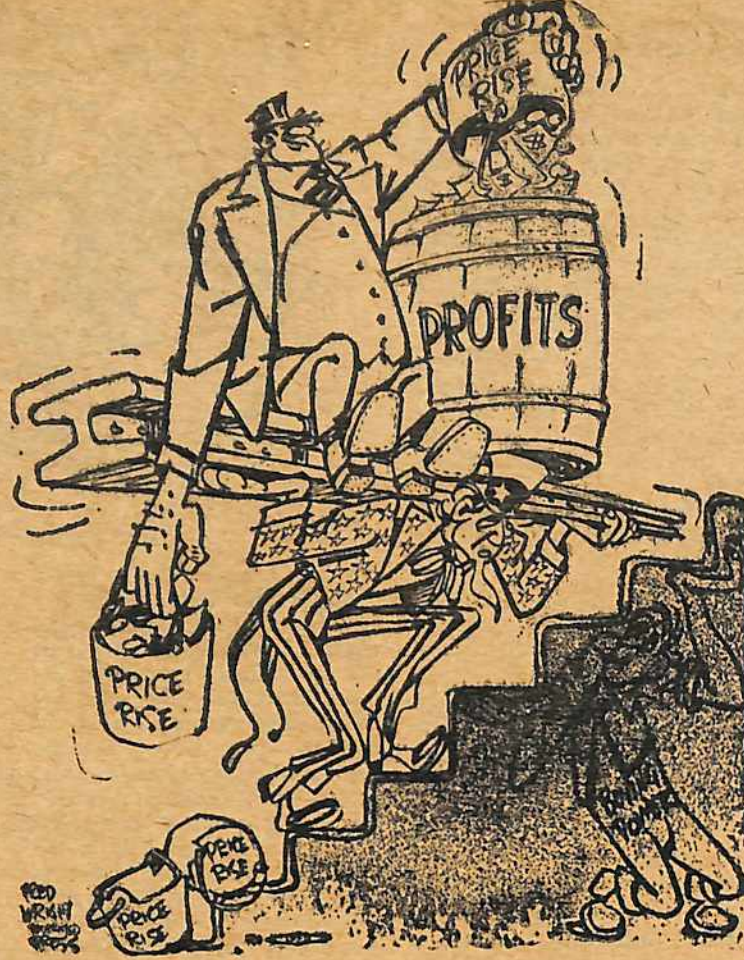
The general line of the Left-Center coalition centered around the patriotic objectives of winning the anti-fascist war, adherence to the war-time no-strike pledge, friendship between the Soviet Union and the capitalist democracies, and support of the Roosevelt labor-liberal alliance in politics.

The general line of the Rightist coalition—headed by Reuther—centered around the proposition that while they were for winning the anti-fascist war, they remained strongly anti-Soviet. This coalition during the war encouraged a UAW referendum on rescinding the no-strike pledge, toyed with the Michigan Commonwealth Federation, which was objectively directed against FDR and urged independence from Phil Murray's policies.

Our correct win-the-war line was executed in a wrong way, due to the rightist policies of Browder. We impermissibly supported piece work, while ignoring war-profiteering; neglected the united front of struggle on shop grievances by methods short of strike action; and were satisfied in merely tailing behind FDR and Phil Murray.

While the effort to rescind the no-strike pledge failed, the Reuther coalition, using such "leftist" slogans as "equality of sacrifice" and "a two front war against fascists abroad and reactionary war profiteers at home", "down with Browder's piece work", succeeded in winning an enlarged mass base for itself in the ranks of the UAW membership.

This, together with Reuther's association with the successful first UAW post-war strike for wage increases, in GM, made it possible for him to win the UAW presidency in 1946. Hence, had the influences of a right-opportunist policy been combatted during the war years, the Left



need not have been so thoroughly beaten immediately after.

A second factor contributing to the 1947 debacle, and having roots in the preceding decade, was to be found in a policy which denied the middle-road or "third force" as legitimate trends in the working class. Instead we concentrated our main fire on them.

This attitude was especially sharpened in the post-war period when we spoke of two main world camps—the camp of peace and democracy, led by the so-

rect in saying that the auto workers could not advance with Reuther's anti-Communist, anti-Soviet, right-wing orientation. We were mistaken when we said that his pro-war, pro-fascist direction was inevitable and that his middle-road pretensions were demagogic and phony.

Our Michigan State Committee report to the 1948 Convention said: "Since 1939 our main line has been to help weld a progressive coalition of Communist and non-Communist auto workers to isolate and defeat the

Eliminate Left Sectarianism In Approach to Auto Workers

cialist Soviet Union; and the camp of war and fascism, led by imperialist USA. We singled out for sharp attack those who, on a world, national and state scale projected (for whatever their reasons) a so-called third or middle-road position. We denied its possibility and said you were either in one camp or the other. It was this wrong approach which made it almost impossible from the beginning of the post-war period to achieve the policy of "forging a broad, democratic people's coalition against war and fascist reaction." While we correctly fought against U.S. imperialist policy of war and reaction, we incorrectly directed our main fire against "Reutherites" and "Reutherism", rather than the imperialists.

The touchstone for our attitude to other forces too often centered exclusively on questions of foreign policy. We were cor-

Reuther policy and leadership, which plays the role of Social-Democratic lackey to the imperialist cause of Wall Street."

This Social-Democrat-is-the-main-enemy line ran through everything. It found expression in our attitude to union policies and tactics, the field of political action, struggle for democracy, struggle for Negro rights, peace, role of the Left, Party, etc. No matter how much we and the Left spoke out against factionalism, we could not rid ourselves of its influence and stigma. The main enemy was Reuther and Reutherism, and we called for his isolation and defeat. Objectively this line obscured who was and how to meet the main enemy of the peace and democratic forces—namely, auto monopoly, Ford, GM, Chrysler.

Yet for the past decade, the Reuther leadership has consolidated its control over the growing auto union. We were too slow in recognizing the need for a different outlook, based on changing conditions and new relationship of forces.

Taking an undifferentiated approach to those who opposed us, and issues they advanced, tended to obscure sharp differences in the Reuther camp and helped consolidate the forces against the Left.

We confused this combination's desire for power and their use of anti-Communism as a jelled political outlook and orientation. We only saw this right-wing combination company-unionising the UAW. We did not see or understand that it would be obliged to react to the pressure and mass struggles of the workers. It did, in fact, later seek to win some concessions and raise important trade union, Negro people's equality, pro-democracy, anti-McCarthy demands, and advance important peaceful co-existence proposals.

At the same time the auto corporations sought to use this combination for their Big Business influence on such questions as divisive red-baiting, support for cold-war policies of Dulles, and their five-year wage freeze contracts, etc. etc.

We did not attach sufficient significance to the broad united front committee in late 1946 for a Michigan State FEPC, which included such diverse political figures as Walter Reuther, Carl Winter and Bishop Haas. This should have fore-shadowed the possibilities of developing united struggles around specific issues and demonstrating the true position of various groups on the basis of their actions.

From 1947 to 1951 we persisted in an approach which called for a new realignment of forces in the union which would emerge out of the growing struggles on the key trade union and economic issues, but which would be anti-Reuther in character.

We placed, correctly, great emphasis, though of a schematic and mechanical nature, on the development of the tactic of the united front of struggle from below and for special attention to the development of single issue struggles. We wrongly approached this with an eye to sharpening up the struggle against the "bosses' boy" and the "chief agent of GM in the union", rather than against the auto trusts. We found ourselves on the opposite side of almost every question projected by top UAW leadership.

In 1951, at Ford Local 800, old hard and fast factional lines were broken by the emergence of the Carl Stellato middle-road position (neither in the "war" or "peace" camp) and which coalesced with the Left. This extremely important development

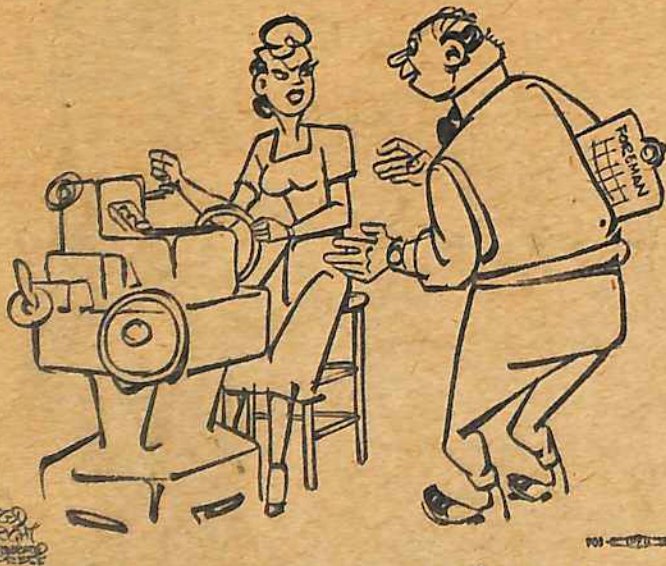
see and show is that the Reuther policies on all basic questions are becoming more and more untenable. They are rapidly moving into a crisis." We called for a shift in tactics, which would abandon the practice of rejecting everything proposed by Reuther, but did not change in our fundamental line and approach, which regarded Reuther as the main enemy.

However, prior to the 1953 convention of the UAW, we said, "With the C. E. Wilson-Eisenhower government in Washington, unity is needed to defend the living standards and liberties, to defend the UAW." At the same time, important developments were taking place within the top UAW administration. With growing unemployment in the winter of 1952-53, a UAW unemployed conference convened in Washington, out of which came the Union's anti-depression program. At the same time the International was actively participating in the struggle for Negro rights. It had actively entered the arena of political action, especially through its leading role in the Democratic Party in Michigan. It played an important role in the growing movement of opposition to McCarthy and McCarthyism.

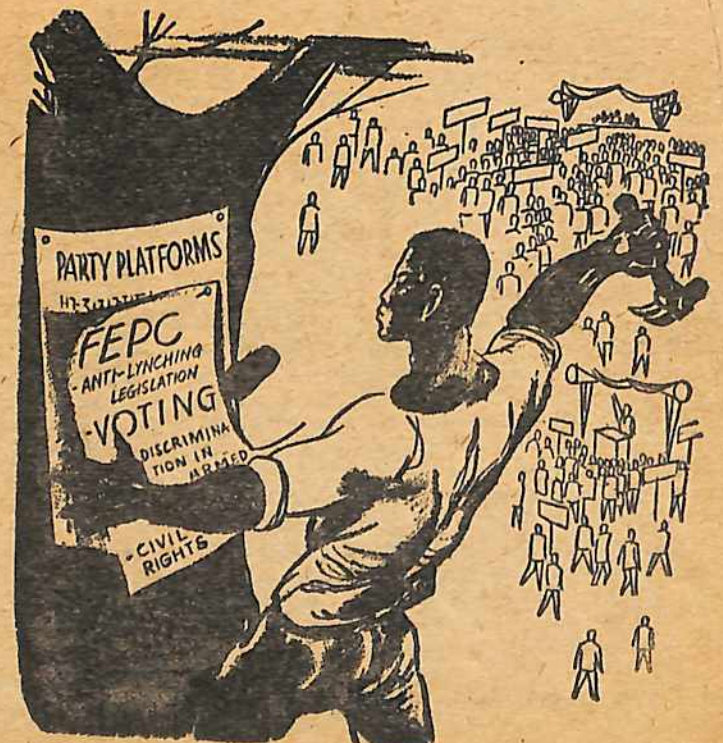
These developments helped to slowly, but inadequately, change our line in the UAW. Our objective was not primarily to defeat Reuther and Reutherism, but rather to influence the development of unity of the entire union, to help it play a relatively progressive role in meeting the new problems of the united labor movement.

The last remnants of our left-sectarian approach to the UAW leadership must now be eliminated. The Reuther policy has gradually changed from 1953 to date in the direction of a more consistent middle-road progressive course. Thus his foreign policy stand has progressed from the 1953 convention policy favoring U.S.-Soviet peace talks at the summit, to the '55 convention stand that "no one can win an H-bomb war", to his current policy favoring the testing of U.S.-Soviet peaceful co-existence, based on mutual foreign aid through the U.N. for underdeveloped lands (including neutrals) without strings attached.

The objective of the Left in the UAW should concentrate on such unsettled UAW questions as the fight against speed-up, ending skilled wage inequities, winning the election of Negroes to the top UAW leadership. These have to be placed in the context of a united UAW cooperating from top to bottom to solve these questions in the course of struggle against the companies and extreme reaction. Constructive pressures from UAW members and local unions along this line can offset the Rightist pressures continuously being directed at Reuther by the companies and the extreme reactionaries.



"ONE STEP CLOSER, MR. HOTSPUR, AND YOU'LL BE DEALING WITH 15 MILLION MEMBERS OF A UNITED LABOR MOVEMENT"



Draft Resolution and Present Problems

(Continued from Page 1)

prominent position in the Resolution and developed fully. Our future as a Party depends on whether we draw all the conclusions theoretically and in actual application to life, from this section of the Resolution.

Recent events in Hungary and Poland have brought these questions to the fore in a most dramatic fashion. There is no doubt in my mind that in former years we would have had no trouble in "analyzing" these events. We would simply have supported the position of the Soviet Union. Just as we did at the time of the Soviet break with Yugoslavia.

But today the majority of the National Committee is refusing to take this "simple" approach. In line with the recognition of past mistakes by the Draft Resolution, we are trying to give an evaluation of events in Eastern Europe based on our own analysis, and when we feel justified take up a critical attitude to the actions of Communists in other countries, including Soviet Communists. Some say this is a departure from international working class solidarity. But that depends on what is meant by this term. In my opinion, this important concept has for too long and with great detriment to the cause of Socialism been given a narrow and incorrect meaning—and to this day some people insist that any criticism of the policies or tactics of the Soviet C. P. constitutes a violation of international working class solidarity. I maintain that this is false. In fact blind support of Soviet policy when it runs counter to the interests of Socialism constitutes an abandonment of this principle.

Likewise the wrong and harmful policies developed during later years of the Stalin leadership, especially as it was expressed in relation to other Socialist countries and Communist parties constituted an outright renunciation of the real content of international working class solidarity.

To the extent that the present leadership of the C.P.S.U. refuses to break clearly with the policies and practices of Stalin, they are compounding these errors and bringing about consequences most harmful to international working class solidarity.

Some people say that we are proposing the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism. Here again we must be more specific. In all of my experience in the Party we were never really free to use the scientific method which is the heart and essence of Marxism-Leninism. Whenever American Communists individually or collectively attempted a creative approach to problems by the use of the science of Marxism, they invariably ran into the stone wall of the requirements to conform to the conclusions of Soviet Marxists.

While we kept saying Marxism-Leninism is no dogma, it should be enriched by conclusions drawn from new experiences, etc., in practice, the initiative for changing any "Marxist proposition" was solely reserved for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The acceptance of any innovation proposed by the Communists of any other country including our own was conditioned by how Soviet Marxists would react to the innovation. This has been the essence of the dead hand of dogmatism that has plagued our movement—we propose to break with this kind of Marxism-Leninism.

In attempting to build the movement for Socialism in the United States, we propose to utilize fully the science of society as developed by social scientists from Marx to this day.

We also propose to examine propositions promulgated by

Marxists in other periods to retain what is applicable and to discard what in our opinion is not valid and has become harmful if retained. We hope to enrich the science of social change on the basis of our concrete examinations and experience.

Our bureaucratic system of organization is very closely connected with these basic policy questions. In the absence of a scientific approach to theory and independence of judgment there can be no democracy in an organization of Marxists. Under these conditions it is really understandable why Democratic Centralism became CENTRALISM. It is also understandable why all Party leaders to a larger or lesser extent became bureaucratic as well as victims of bureaucracy.

It is no accident that the Resolution drops the expression Democratic Centralism. This expression has become identified with a system of organization which stifled democratic expression, which penalized and in many cases drove out of the Party comrades who sought even in a limited way to challenge the very policies that led to the present crisis. It is most unfortunate that some comrades who in the past several years have been most prominent in urging the Party to make the necessary changes are now on the outside of the Party and that many others have been so treated as to lead them to lose confidence in the Party's ability to make the drastic changes required for its recovery.

The Resolution makes a beginning in spelling out a new attitude to inner Party democracy, an attitude which will discard the old formulas of "Democratic Centralism," "Monolithic unity and iron discipline," and replace them with a system of organization corresponding to the proposed basic changes in policy. This new system of organization will be developed further in the Draft Constitution. (I hope to comment in its concrete aspects in a later article.)

Some comrades are of the opinion that the guarantee of basic change cannot be achieved unless the Party changes its form of organization to a non-electoral political organization and changes its name so as to delete the word Communist. I do not share this view.

I believe that the basic changes in our Party which are urgently needed and decisive are those having to do with the content of our policies. The form of our organization, important as that is, can best be worked out on the basis of the decisions of the Convention on policy. The Draft Resolution proposes that a program committee be elected at the Convention to draft a Party program. This program will be based not only on the present discussion and decisions of the Convention but will go much deeper into theoretical questions. It will be the test of our ability to apply Marxism-Leninism to the realities of American life. It is this program that will have to spell out concretely new propositions as well as our attitude to many propositions which we have hitherto accepted but now consider either incorrect or obsolete or inapplicable to our conditions.

It seems to me entirely premature to give up the electoral character of our organization before we have had the chance to work out a Party program. On the contrary I am convinced that in the process of working out the program we will come to the conclusion that it is essential to retain our electoral character.

Furthermore; the proposal to change the form of our organization at this Convention gives rise to fears amongst sections of our membership that in addition to

the changes in policy which we are plainly projecting the change in form is designed to open the way for liquidating the essential features of an American Marxist Party. When the question of form will be discussed in conjunction with a proposed Party program such fears will lose all basis and the question of form of organization will be discussed fully on its merits.

As to the question of name, I do not believe that we should change our name on the ground of "dramatizing basic changes" as some say "Because the name is discredited." Rather we should change the name if by doing so we can help the Party break out of its isolation and help it overcome its present status of virtual illegality in the trade unions and mass organizations.

I am impressed with the argument made by many comrades during these weeks of discussion that as a result of our basic changes in policy many workers in trade unions and at least some leaders would want to remove the bars that now keep our comrades from enjoying the full right of union membership, including the right to hold union office. The argument is made that as long as we retain our present name irrespective of our basic changes in policy these workers and leaders cannot overcome constitu-



tional provisions which bar members of the Communist Party from holding office. These and similar arguments are very worthy of consideration by the

present discussion and by the Convention; if proven valid they would constitute in my opinion good and sufficient reason for changing the name of our Party.

New Data on Negro Question

(Continued from Page 12)

pernicious influences and practices of white chauvinism, in the first place, and the growing tendency of the Negro people to retain and strengthen their own institutions and organizations devoted to their interests as a people, sustain and prolong a binational situation. Because of the historical factors and the continuing oppressive forces, the process of integration is protracted, and is going through the phase in which the Negro people increasingly pursue their aim of freedom by united action as a people. The special situation in the Black Belt, especially in relation to the battle for democracy in the South and the need to remove the obstacles to Negro advance, continues to play a basic role. The continuing advance of the struggle for Negro rights in this region imparts new strength to the Negro people's freedom struggle nationally, and raises the level of that struggle. This moves in the direction of enhancing the role of the Negro people as an increasingly important force in the political life of the South and of the country as a whole.

As trends and potentials in the present situation indicate, and

taking into account the specific feature of the position of the Negro people, it is likely that the Negro freedom movement for some time to come will take national form, although its aims will remain integrationist. By this is meant that, even under conditions of democratic advance, the Negro people will continue to seek assurances and special guarantees that their rights will be respected and defended. Complete representation at all levels of government, from township and county to state capital and Washington, will help attain these guarantees and assurances. But the Negro people will necessarily also seek additional safeguards, both inside and outside the structure of the political system and of government, and not only through their people's organizations as they now exist. Certain current developments (like the evolution of the NAACP, the boycott movements, the national conference, etc.) may lead in the direction of a kind of congress of the Negro people, expressing their aspirations and programs as a people. Although working in coalition with labor and other forces, the Negro is more and more relying primarily on his own efforts as a people, and

seeks adequate national expression for this.

In recognizing this situation, and in supporting the aims and struggles of the Negro freedom movement, the Communist Party seeks to strengthen and advance the coalition between the Negro people and the working class. It sees in working class solidarity between Negro and white, the base for which has been greatly extended, the greatest force favoring integration. It sees white chauvinism wherever it operates within the labor and working class movement as the main obstacle to cementing Negro-white workers' unity and to the strengthening of the coalition between the Negro people as a whole and labor as a class. It puts forth as a pressing task for the labor movement the unionization of the South, which can become the driving force of the battle for democracy in the South and which can muster the forces for the decisive defeat of Dixiecratism. It seeks to develop the coalition of the Negro people with labor, and its other allies, along long-term durable lines, which will assure Negro freedom and strengthen all the forces working for the fruition of democracy and the attainment of socialism.

IN NEXT BULLETIN

NO. 3

- NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION
- NEW CONCEPTS OF PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES
- DRAFT RESOLUTION ON TRADE UNION WORK