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**On Uniting and Strengthening the Party
and Its Mass Base***

By National Committee, CPUSA

SINCE THE 16th national convention, the Party has been subjected to numerous attacks, difficulties and desertions. It has weathered these, and remains very much alive and active. And during this period it has made constructive contributions in certain fields of mass work.

Nonetheless, the Party finds itself on the whole still in the critical state into which it has been plunged for some time—a situation for which the entire National Committee bears a collective responsibility. For the most part, the Party has been unsuccessful in breaking out of its isolation. Basic ideological differences continue to exist within the Party, and the Party leadership itself is sharply divided, and therefore largely immobilized. Paradoxically, this state

of affairs prevails at a time when developments at home and abroad have created a more favorable situation for advancing the struggles for peace and social progress.

To fulfill our Party's responsibility to our people and country in this year of challenge, to unite and strengthen the Party and to extend its political influence and mass ties, the National Committee considers that the following things should be done:

1. First and foremost, it is essential to insure that our Party participate ever more effectively in the vital struggles of today, that it make the many political, ideological and organizational contributions of which it is fully capable. High among these are:

To help advance the fight for jobs and security in the face of the acute problem of unemployment, which has

* This Resolution was submitted by Eugene Dennis, to the meeting of the National Committee, held Feb. 14-16. It was approved by a vote of: *in favor*: 32; *opposed*: 20; *abstaining*: 3.

grown to the proportions of a national emergency.

To help extend the movement for summit negotiations of the Big Powers, for the outlawing of nuclear weapons, for disarmament and for the expansion of East-West trade.

To help reinforce the Negro-labor alliance and the rising Negro people's movement for the right to vote, for jobs and housing, and for full integration into American life.

To help advance labor's unity and its struggles to defend its standards, its organizations and its rights against the offensive of the corporations and the growing menace of "right-to-work" laws, and of governmental regulation and licensing of unions.

To help defeat the new assaults on civil liberties, manifested in a fresh wave of Congressional committee witch-hunts, in the outlawing of organizations like the NAACP in southern states, and in the launching anew of Smith Act membership and Taft-Hartley trials.

To help unfold the broadest coalition policy and movement, as well as to develop our own independent position, in the 1958 Congressional and state elections—a focal point of national struggle embracing all major issues.

In these important campaigns and struggles the Communist Party, notwithstanding its smallness and the unevenness of its strength and work in different areas, has a big and vital contribution to make, as recent events and experience clearly affirm. The Party has much to offer in helping to spark mass activity, in clarifying issues and perspectives, in

mobilizing the Left and progressive forces, in influencing the direction of popular movements, in promoting unity of action of Negro and white, farmer and worker, and in helping to build broad, democratic mass movements for economic welfare, democratic liberties and peace. In so doing, the Party will meet its political responsibilities in the present situation and will move towards overcoming its isolation and resolving many of the ideological differences in its ranks.

2. To make our best contribution in the present and coming struggles, we need to establish far greater clarity on the main political line and orientation of the 16th national convention of the Party, and to imbue our work with the perspective it has projected.

The 16th national convention established a generally sound orientation on the main questions confronting us. Among these are the crucial fight for peaceful coexistence; the building of an anti-monopoly coalition; the exceptional role of the Negro liberation movement and of the national task of democratizing the South; the fight for labor unity and independent political action by labor and its allies; the indispensable role of the Communist Party; the establishment of broad united front relations on the most vital mass issues with other democratic elements and organizations, including with diverse pro-socialist groupings;

the promotion of proletarian internationalism; the vital importance of the fight against sectarianism and dogmatism, as well as the urgent necessity of combatting Right-opportunism and revisionism; and the charting of a peaceful, constitutional American road to socialism.

3. Particularly noteworthy is the stress of the national convention that "our chief task is to strengthen, rebuild and consolidate the Communist Party and overcome its isolation." And the convention clearly defined the essential features of the Party, reaffirming that it must be a working-class party based on the principles of scientific socialism, of Marxism-Leninism, applying and developing these in accord with the traditions and class struggle in our country.

The convention emphasized the indispensable vanguard role of a Marxist working class party of socialism, and the necessity of striving as such to win mass influence and leadership for our Party. It declared that the Party, guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism, is motivated by both the highest patriotism toward our own country and the great concept of proletarian internationalism.

It defined the Party as a party of action—not a debating society—in which the minority must be subordinated to the majority once a decision is taken. At the same time, it took steps to combat bureaucracy,

reinforcing inner-Party democracy to assure the fullest contribution of all members in the making and execution of policy, while prohibiting all factions and anti-Party groupings and practices.

The convention also underscored the fact that the Party is not a temporary organization nor a holding operation, supposedly serving as a stepping stone to some nebulous-defined successor. *The Party is here to stay.* Without it, the fight for social progress will be limited and the victory of socialism is inconceivable.

The mass party of socialism for which we strive must also be a party of this type—a working class vanguard party guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism. It must not be confused with other types of political parties of a united front character, or with an idea of a so-called united socialist party in which adherents of Marxism-Leninism would be only one among a number of other ideological currents. Nor should it be confused with the urgent need of promoting united front relations and cooperation between Communists and other pro-socialist elements.

These fundamental concepts of the role of our Marxist Party are crucial to its consolidation and growth now and in the future. Our Party cannot be built successfully and its mass work and united front relationships effectively developed unless our Party is a vanguard working-class organization uniting

theory and practice, and bound by a common Marxist-Leninist ideology. Neither will our Party be strengthened and its mass work enhanced if it is guided by doctrinaire concepts and is dogmatic in outlook and divorced from the life and activities of the American working class.

4. In estimating the twin evils of Left-sectarianism and Right opportunism, the convention correctly declared that our errors of the past period were chiefly of a Left-sectarian character. It pointed out that sectarianism and dogmatism have been a historic weakness of our movement, against which a decisive struggle must be waged—a struggle that will necessarily be a protracted one. But the convention also pointed out that *both* Left-sectarianism and Right-opportunism have objective roots in the capitalist society in which we live, and that *both* must be fought at all times, with emphasis on that which at a given moment constitutes the greater danger.

Events since the Convention have sharply underscored this. On the one hand, the danger of Left-sectarianism and dogmatism has grown, including a resurgence of a ultra-Left viewpoint and grouping which constitutes a formidable obstacle to our work and a serious menace to the unity and political line of the Party. On the other hand, there has developed an increasingly dangerous Right-opportunist and revisionist viewpoint, exemplified most strikingly by the

anti-Marxist views and actions of a Gates.

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

5. The establishment of clarity and agreement on the above points will go far toward uniting and strengthening the Party; in fact, it is a prerequisite for doing so.

But the National Committee also recognizes that there are other issues which presently serve as sources of

differences and division within the Party. One has been the controversy in the national leadership over the recently issued Declaration of the twelve Communist and Workers Parties of the socialist countries.

This is a document of far-reaching, historic importance. Together with the 64 Party Manifesto on Peace, it serves to unite all peace forces in a successful struggle to avert war and promote peaceful co-existence. It reinforces the unity both of the socialist countries and of the international working-class and Marxist movements. It is a major Marxist-Leninist contribution to the fight for world peace, democracy, national freedom and socialism. Communists, socialists and progressives everywhere should study it and learn from it, Americans no less than others.

The National Committee rejects the erroneous and harmful views of those who regard the Declaration as a "reversal" or a "retreat" from the position of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, or of those who seek to deprecate it by damning it with faint praise. We reject equally the sectarian view of those who look upon the Declaration and its conclusions concerning universally valid Marxist-Leninist principles as a dogma and a substitute for our own independent theoretical and political work.

The National Committee directs the National Executive Committee to prepare a definitive statement on

the Declaration, to issue outlines and otherwise do everything possible to stimulate its widest study and discussion, both within the Party and outside its ranks.

There are also a number of other political and ideological questions over which differences now exist within our Party, some of which require further examination and discussion. These should not be permitted to divide us in our work today. Certainly many of these differences can be resolved in the course of preparation of the Party's basic program, a draft of which the N. C. proposes should be completed by the end of 1958.

Finally, a most serious threat to Party unity is the destructive effect of factionalism. To defend and reinforce unity, it is necessary at all costs to eradicate all factional activities and groupings in our ranks.

6. To help end the present impasse and virtual paralysis within the national leadership of the Party, it is necessary to strengthen this leadership in a number of ways.

This is not a matter merely of organizational changes, and, least of all, will the answer be found in general purges, as some propose. What is needed, rather, is the reorganization of the national center to provide a team which will resolutely and effectively carry out the main political line of the 16th convention as it is interpreted and developed by the National Committee.

The operative national political leadership should be a tested and capable leadership which will fight for the Party, its theory and principles. Moreover, it should be a representative leadership, but, above all, one with a decisive majority reflecting the majority views of the National Committee and the Party membership. And it should be constituted as a leading body meeting at least on a weekly basis and responsible to the National Committee yet capable of acting authoritatively on all questions between meetings of the N. C.

For us—American Marxists who fight for peace, democracy and socialism—the Party is our most precious possession. This is why we American Communists, like Communists everywhere, treasure our Party, and will make every effort and sacrifice to preserve and build it.

Our Party has suffered severe blows during the past years. The forces of monopolist reaction have dedicated themselves to nothing short of its utter destruction. But they have not succeeded in this, nor will they ever succeed, notwithstanding those in our ranks who become disoriented and desert or betray the Party. For our Party grows out of the class struggle and the needs and socialist aspirations of the American working class; hence there will al-

ways be devoted working-class adherents of Marxism who will, under the most difficult of circumstances, keep it alive and flourishing.

Despite all attacks against it, the Party has made and continues to make many sterling contributions to the struggles of the American people, and has won the support of many thousands among the workers, the Negro people, and all the oppressed in our country. Those who deprecate the Party and cry that it is discredited or finished surrender to imperialist pressures and do a disservice both to the Party and the American working class. If the Party makes the contribution of which it is capable in the days ahead, it will win the respect and support of growing numbers of America's working people, and will increase in size and influence.

We call on all Party members to defend the Party, and to fight for its Marxist-Leninist program, theory and principles. We call on all Party members and organizations to strive to develop the maximum political and organizing initiatives and participation in the momentous mass struggles of today, to meet the great challenge of 1958. By so doing, we will strengthen the Party and its mass ties and influence. And we shall help shape the course of events in the interests of our class and our country.