

SPEECH IN NOMINATION OF EUGENE DENNIS FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARYSHIP OF THE C.P.U.S.A.

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

National Committee meeting, C.P.U.S.A., July 17, 1946

COMRADES:

You have before you, among other organizational proposals, the recommendation of the National Board that we should elect a General Secretary at this meeting of the National Committee. This decision was taken upon my initiative. The National Board is of the unanimous opinion that this action is necessary in order to normalize our set-up of national officers and to strengthen generally the work of the Party's national center.

The selection of a General Secretary is a most important step in the life of our Party. Consequently, the National Board gave careful consideration to this matter, and, as a result, it has commissioned me to present to you its unanimous choice for this important post. You will not be surprised, I am sure, to learn that the comrade so honored by the board's recommendation is Gene Dennis. Inasmuch as Comrade Dennis, for several months past, has already been performing much of the work of

General Secretary, his election will, in fact, be a recognition of a situation already existing.

Comrade Dennis is well qualified to fill the high Party post for which the board recommends him. He is a worker, born and bred in the class struggle. He was formerly a teamster and an electrical worker, and he was an active participant in the unions and struggles of the workers. Dennis, who has been a member of the Party for 19 years, has also had very wide Party experience, as you all know, in almost every phase of its political work. He was a district organizer in Wisconsin; he has worked many years as a highly responsible leader in the Party's national center, directly responsible for political action and the mass campaigns of the Party, and as Editor of *Political Affairs*.

Possessed of an extensive knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, both in theory and practice, Comrade Dennis is a good political analyst. He is also a realistic tactician in the formulation and carrying out of Party policy.

The high quality of his reports to the last several meetings of the National Committee is known to all. He is a growing, developing leader, and, with increased responsibility, he may be depended upon to measure up to the big tasks that he will have to face as the Party's General Secretary.

At this point, I would like to state that Comrade Dennis was among the Party leaders who were least affected by Browder's revisionism. As I pointed out at our 1945 convention, his tendency to diverge from Browder's opportunistic conceptions was well illustrated by an incident that took place at the National Committee meeting just prior to the arrival of the Duclos article. Browder, in his report to that meeting, developed the opportunistic theory that American reaction was suffering shipwreck along with Hitler, and the inference he drew was that reaction was no longer a real danger in this country.

Dennis, however, in his report, presented a quite different perspective of sharp struggle ahead. The difference between the two reports was so marked that a Canadian comrade, a visitor at the plenum, sagely remarked that while from Browder's report he had gathered the impres-

sion that the fight against reaction in this country, as well as abroad, was just about won, from Dennis' report, on the other hand, he had gotten the idea that the main struggle was still ahead of us. The sequel, of course, showed that Browder was wrong in seeing a long period of placid political development ahead of us, and that Dennis was right in anticipating a perspective of sharpening struggle.

Among his many qualifications, Comrade Dennis is a capable mass organizer. This he has demonstrated in the various campaigns that he has led for the Party. In these days of active mass struggle and systematic Party building, Dennis' abilities as an organizer will, with his added responsibilities, be a real asset to our Party.

In view of Comrade Dennis' various qualifications, therefore, the National Board gives him its nomination. To this recommendation of the board, let me add my own hearty personal endorsement. I hope that the National Committee will concur in the board's action and will unanimously elect Comrade Dennis as the General Secretary of the Communist Party.