

**THE  
COMMUNISTS  
TAKE A  
NEW LOOK**

**REPORT TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.**

**By Eugene Dennis**

**25¢**

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NEW CENTURY PUBLISHERS: *New York*

1956

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THIS PAMPHLET contains the complete text of the report delivered by Eugene Dennis, on behalf of the Communist Party's National Board, to the enlarged meeting of its National Committee, held in New York City, April 28-May 1, 1956. The report was approved by the National Committee.

The report begins with the remark: "Five years have gone by since the last full meeting of our National Committee." During those years, Dennis and six other members of the National Committee were serving 5-year sentences in jail under the Smith Act. Others are either currently in jail, out on appeal, or on trial. Thus, this meeting was "full" only in a relative sense and was enlarged by the participation of a number of co-workers of the National Committee. Mr. Dennis' report, dealing with the general problems and tasks confronting the American people and his Party, together with the reports of Max Weiss, the Party's Educational Director, on the significance of the recent XXth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and of Claude Lightfoot, Chairman of the Illinois Communist Party, dealing with the 1956 elections, constitute the position presented by the Communist Party on key issues of the day for discussion by its membership.

In setting forth their point of view, Mr. Dennis, his co-reporters and the Communist National Committee solicit comment, suggestions and criticism from members of the Party as well as the general public. Communications should be addressed to: Discussion Committee, P.O. Box 87, Cooper Station, New York 3, N. Y.

**"Our American Communist Party, guided by its socialist principles and scientific outlook, is going to take a new look at all problems confronting our nation and our people."**

**—EUGENE DENNIS in speech at  
Carnegie Hall, January 20, 1956.**

Published by NEW CENTURY PUBLISHERS, 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.  
May, 1956



209

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

## CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
I. THE STATE OF THE UNION AND THE 1956 ELECTIONS	5
The Economic Situation	7
The Labor Merger and Political Action	8
The South and the Constitutional Crisis	10
New Opportunities for Peace	12
For the Defense of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights	13
What Can Be Done in the '56 Elections?	15
How the People Can Win	16
For a New Political Alignment	18
II. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE PARTY'S WORK	19
Was the Degree of Isolation Inevitable?	20
Policies in the Struggle for Peace	22
Estimate of the Fascist Danger	23
On Imminence of Economic Crisis	27
The Left and the Split in the CIO	28
Electoral Policy in '48	31
Perspectives of the Party Program	32
Other Political and Tactical Errors	34
Main Character of the Errors: Left Sectarianism	35
Collective Leadership and Inner-Party Democracy	36
III. TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES	38
Promote United Front Relations and Alliances	38
Attention to Organizational Work	40
For a Mass Party of Socialism	41
Put an End to Dogmatism	43
The American Road to Socialism	44
For a Peaceful and Democratic Road to Socialism	46

## I. THE STATE OF THE UNION AND THE 1956 ELECTIONS

Five years have gone by since the last full meeting of our National Committee. At that time, in 1951, the war in Korea was at its height. The war in Indo-China was continuing with no apparent sign of conclusion. In Eastern Europe the rift with Yugoslavia was stirring the hopes of U.S. imperialism, and on every front throughout the world Wall Street was pressing the cold war with mounting vigor.

In the five years since then, the war in Korea, so hated by the American people, was brought to an end. Despite the efforts of the Nixons-Knowlands-Dulleses to prolong and extend the Indo-China war, this war, so hated by the French people, was likewise brought to an end. The bold peace initiatives of the Soviet Union succeeded in lessening tensions in a number of critical situations, as well as in healing the breach with Yugoslavia.

The general significance of the present period is embodied in *Bandung* and *Geneva*, the meaning of which was correctly signaled at our National Party conference last December. As a result of the changes flowing from the second world war, and with the emergence of socialism as a world system, and the historic victories of hundreds of millions of former colonial peoples in attaining their independence—a new relationship in world forces has taken place extraordinarily and decisively favorable to the camp of peace, democracy, and socialism.

International tensions have been reduced. In more and more areas the struggle between the East and West is moving over into the arena of economics and the battle of ideas. Throughout the Western world the whole policy of aggressive military alliances, such as NATO, is being brought into question—in fact, NATO is in the throes of a deep crisis.

Even in the last few weeks we have seen additional reflections of these changes: The request of little Iceland that the United States remove its troops from their territory; the overwhelming election defeat in Ceylon of the former administration which based

its policy on alliance with the so-called "West"; the recent castigation of U.S. policy by the leaders of the French government; and the noteworthy impact of the latest Soviet proposals for a detente in the Mideast—all are signs of the times.

A central feature of the present situation is the gigantic international impact of the XXth Congress of the CPSU.\* The supreme confidence of the Soviet people, based in no small part on the unprecedented results of the last five-year plan and the epic prospects for the new one, has caught the imagination of the world with the new possibilities opened up for peaceful co-existence and competition.

The recognition of the fact that the Soviet Union has already given unencumbered economic aid amounting to six billion dollars to China and the people's democracies (including over half a billion to non-socialist countries), is tipping the scales toward more sober approaches on the part of many capitalist circles, including some in the USA, to the questions of peaceful co-existence and East-West trade. The newly recognized economic strength of the Soviet Union, and the conformity of its conditions of aid with the principles of peace and non-interference in the affairs of the recipient country, is having a profound effect not only on the former colonial countries, but also on those still struggling for their independence, as well as on France and Italy and the Scandinavian countries.

The XXth Congress also had a profound impact upon all working class organizations, including the Socialist Parties of the world. Undoubtedly this will facilitate in the near future a great advance in united action of Socialists and Communists, of Communists and Catholic masses, of all who wish to struggle for peace and progress. This is bound up in particular with the socialist achievements in the USSR during the past three years, with the positive effects of the dynamic peace policy of the Soviet Union, and the further development of Marxist theoretical principles elaborated at the XXth Congress in respect to the non-inevitability of wars and the possibilities for peaceful transition to socialism in various countries—historic theoretical propositions whose immense political and practical significance has yet to be fully grasped.

The re-evaluation of past ideas and practices, which was infi-

nately greater than just the re-evaluation of the Stalin leadership, had the purpose and effect of putting an end to those violations of socialist democracy which did serious damage and were an intolerable hindrance upon the further advance of socialism. It concerned itself with the elimination of grossly wrong and harmful practices and the anti-Leninist concepts that fed them. There has been much confusion over these developments and the enemies of socialism in the USA have seemed to be having something of a field day. But as for us, in drawing the profound lessons of these developments, let us grasp the achievements of the XXth Congress in their entirety—in relation to the epoch-making changes now going on in the whole world, particularly those which have arisen from the establishment of socialism as a world system, and from the disintegration of the old colonial empires.

### THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

America has not been immune from what has been happening in the world. Important changes have taken place in our country, although these cannot yet be characterized as a qualitative change. There are new elements in the picture, but a big chunk of the past is still with us.

Let us briefly note some of the high points of the present political situation in the country:

*On the economic front:* While factors making for a cyclical crisis continue to mature, this process takes place unevenly. There is, as yet, no evidence that would make possible any specific prediction of the time when a major depression will take place, although it seems highly unlikely for '56. There is evidence, however, that a decline in production and employment may take place before the year is out, which may still be succeeded by another upturn. High profits and high armaments continue, but the peak of industrial production has levelled off with some signs of weakening; the decline in auto continues, and unemployment in the industry is now over 140,000. There is also a certain decline in residential construction.

The crisis in agriculture is steadily deepening. Farm income has declined 26 per cent since its peak in 1951, and almost 2 million workers have been forced out of agriculture since 1950. The position of the lower one-third economic group rapidly grows more insecure, especially that of the Negro people.

\* See *Report of the Central Committee, CPSU, to the XXth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, by N. S. Khrushchev. New Century Publishers, N. Y.; 128 pp.; 75c.

It is on the basis of this unstable economic picture and the mounting offensive of big capital that there is an upsurge in the strike movement, the farm revolt has assumed explosive political proportions in the Midwest, and a sharp political and agrarian crisis is unfolding in the Deep South where tenant and share-cropping farms have decreased by 30 per cent over the past five years.

This situation urgently calls for a rounded-out popular economic program of struggle, an immediate anti-monopoly program of action designed to safeguard the pressing economic interests of the great masses of workers, farmers, Negro people, and small business—regardless of when the economic crisis develops. And this program should include concrete proposals for curbing the monopolies and for providing for the public ownership of a number of industries, such as in the atomic energy field and public utilities.

### THE LABOR MERGER AND POLITICAL ACTION

Now a few words regarding the situation in the ranks of *organized labor*: the outstanding development in the recent period is the re-unification of the two national trade union centers, the merger of the CIO and AFL. This re-unification is a move of great significance despite the fact that it bears many of the halting and grudging features that have been characteristic of so much of labor's leadership in the past period. Basically it represents the sentiments and pressures of the mass of the membership in the shops and on the job, and will, in due course, in the process of struggle, enormously enhance labor's economic and political strength and the advancement of its genuine interests.

Already the merger has removed any basis of so-called "legitimacy" for conflicts between unions in the same industry. While unification remains a slow and uneven process and requires considerable prodding and rank and file encouragement, nonetheless it is giving a definite stimulus to the merger of dual unions in the same field.

There are also already visible within the AFL-CIO internal re-groupings and struggles, some based on an unprincipled struggle for power, but others reflecting to one degree or another differences on vital issues (e.g., Reuther and Meany on India). By avoiding a factional approach, yet helping to develop movements and ac-

tions around proposals that bear a progressive character, an impetus can be given to organizing the unorganized, especially in the South, and new alliances can be forged that can help shape many realignments and developments in the merged labor movement in a positive direction. Recent experiences in the midwest as well as in New York City indicate what is possible on this score.

Meanwhile, and as a consequence of the merger, the pronounced upsurge in the fighting spirit and solidarity of the working class continues, as has been evidenced in the bitter, prolonged strikes in Westinghouse, Kohler and Republic Aviation. The demands of the workers have centered not only around wage increases, but also against speed-up and the intensification of labor, and for increased layoff and fringe benefits, all of which express the workers' deep feeling of insecurity in regard to the instability of their jobs.

While the merger has accelerated labor's independent political activity and organization in certain respects, on the whole this vital field of labor's activity has been developing very slowly and irregularly. There has been an increase in the recent period of labor's mass lobbying on questions of defense of trade union rights and social security, civil rights legislation, and in some cases, on farm legislation—both on a national scale and in a number of states. There has been increased trade union intervention in the matter of influencing the selection of certain major Party candidates in Illinois and New York, for example, and here and there the Left is gaining acceptance as labor's political mobilization expands.

In respect to the struggle for civil rights, a stronger labor-Negro people's alliance is emerging, and even top figures of the AFL—such as Meany, are feeling compelled to take a more forthright position on equal rights. Similarly on the basic issues of civil liberties, on the Smith Act, and on the question of the State Seditious Acts, a new political awareness has been noticeable on the part of sections of labor, especially in Social-Democratic circles.

But in at least two key aspects the independent political activity of labor is far from satisfactory and lags dangerously behind the needs and possibilities of the situation.

First, of course, is on the struggle for peace. Important differences are developing between the Reuther forces and Meany, particularly on such key questions as foreign economic aid and

the role of the neutrals—a point that was dramatized by the recent speeches of Reuther in India at the same time that Meany published a lengthy letter in the *New York Times* sharply denouncing Nehru and neutralism.

It is also true that other international union leaders have raised their voices from time to time on behalf of various phases of the struggle for peace—leading figures of the Machinists, Butchers, Packinghouse, Hotel and Restaurant, Amalgamated Clothing Workers and of Railway Labor. However, these voices have been muted in the recent period for fear of coming in conflict with Meany and upsetting the merger. It is entirely possible that as a result of the position of Reuther, those voices that have spoken out in the past, will speak out again.

Nonetheless, with the exception of the recent statements of Reuther, and the position taken by a number of independent unions, few spokesmen and sectors of labor are differentiating themselves from the Eisenhower Administration's foreign policy and voicing criticism of the position of the Democratic high command for higher military expenditures.

Secondly: very little is being done to actually crystallize labor's independent political organizations, which are of such exceptional importance. Only in parts of Michigan and a few other areas are the AFL-CIO unions building their independent political machinery—without which the political activity of the local union members is either non-existent, or else inevitably gravitates around the pressing campaign needs of individual pro-labor political figures instead of around the all-around interests of labor. Major attention should be devoted to bringing about a change in this situation.

### **THE SOUTH AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS**

Next, some observations regarding *the South and civil rights*: The sharp political struggles developing in the Deep South constitute a key factor in the present political situation. They are exerting a major influence on national affairs and the elections. Against the background of the sharpening economic situation in the South (especially in agriculture) and the new steps to organize the unorganized, stands on the one side the new Eastland-Jenner-pro-fascist conspiracy against the Supreme Court and the Constitution, supported by the new pro-fascist White Citizens

Councils and the nullification policy of the State governments.

On the other side, arising out of this new and sharpening situation, stands a revitalized Negro liberation movement, the upsurge of which has reached unprecedented proportions especially in Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina. This movement which is developing as a broad all-inclusive national freedom front, is backed by a noticeable growth in Negro-white solidarity in various parts of the country, as well as by concerted economic action on the part of the Negro working people.

That this new upsurge is not limited to the South is reflected, among other things, in the growing unity of the Negro people, north as well as south. It is reflected in the fact that the Negro workers, encouraged by the Left and assisted by many white workers, were able to compel the election of two Negro leaders as vice-presidents of the merged AFL-CIO.

But also the fact is that despite widespread sympathy and considerable support among the white masses, the struggles of the Negro people are far from receiving the aid and backing they need and should get from the white masses, and in the first place from the labor movement. Here is one of the major tasks we must face up to.

Obviously in this broad movement the Left cannot work in the old way. The advanced workers must not be impatient with the methods of action frequently adopted, even where they do not fully agree, as for example the limitations placed by the NAACP leadership on mass participation and actions in the recent Washington Civil Rights Mobilization. By its work, by struggle in our dwelling places and shops, in the neighborhoods and in the mass organizations, the Left must win the confidence of the Negro people and their movements on every level. And now, as never before, one of the major contributions we can make is to help achieve a firmer alliance between organized labor and the Negro people's movement.

Moreover, around the basic issues and struggles which have come to the fore and have been joined in the Deep South, it is essential to recognize that a profound political crisis is developing in the Democratic Party, and a sharp constitutional crisis is arising in the nation. Whereas heretofore it had appeared possible that these irreconcilable differences would be compromised and tem-

porarily patched up in the Democratic Party nationally in '56, life has shown that the opposite may be the case. This situation confronts labor and the Negro people with new opportunities and with the vital task of influencing and shaping the development of this struggle.

### NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEACE

A word on one aspect of the State of the Union and the issue of peace: The striking successes of the Soviet and Chinese peace proposals for lessening international tensions, the headway already made in promoting peaceful negotiations among the Great Powers in the recent period, and the resulting pressures from such diverse quarters as France, Scandinavia, and India, for serious steps towards disarmament—all this has forced the beginning of a certain “agonizing re-appraisal” in the ranks of Wall Street and its twin parties. Both the GOP and the Democrats are casting about for a method of counteracting the recurring Soviet and Chinese proposals for disarmament and for peaceful trade and cultural relations and economic competition.

Thus far, while acknowledging that the war danger has diminished and that the arena of East-West conflicts is increasingly shifting to the economic and ideological fields, both major parties strive to continue, although in a modified way, the basic aspects of monopoly's cold war program (*i. e.*, NATO, SEATO, METO, etc.) The colossal bipartisan arms program (which has even been increased this year) is a grim reminder of that fact. Yet within both major parties greater stress is now being laid on a Point Four program, and in some GOP and Democratic circles, certain voices are also being raised favoring some initial steps towards partial disarmament.

But, above and beyond both major parties, a peace demand is rising at the grass roots, where the myth of the “Soviet menace” is wearing exceedingly thin, calling for new moves on the part of the United States to promote East-West trade and to facilitate a further reduction of war tensions and a halt to the armaments race, both through direct conferences at the Summit and through the United Nations. Broad and influential groups from women's, church, farm, youth, and progressive organizations have been calling for concrete steps to effect universal disarmament, and espe-

cially for a ban on A and H bombs. And here and there, as we have noted, influential voices are being similarly raised from among the ranks of labor, especially from among the pro-Reuther forces.

In this connection note should be taken of the recently announced ten point program of aid to underdeveloped countries put forward by Reuther in the name of the UAWA. This proposal, which among other things calls for joint action by the USA and the USSR through the U.N., is based on a concept of peaceful co-existence and competition between the two social systems and holds the possibility of strengthening the fight for peace, for helping end the cold war. Objectively, this program is also a platform of struggle against the Meany anti-Soviet line in the trade unions, as well as a positive step in the direction of encouraging the pro-labor Democrats to modify the reactionary or, in some cases, muddled—course most of them are pursuing on foreign policy. Here is one issue, but an important one, which, if properly grasped and supported, can greatly influence events and help bring a new perspective in the labor movement based on an active policy of promoting peaceful co-existence.

Unquestionably, the struggle for a foreign policy based on peaceful negotiations, together with the burning issue of civil rights and the farm situation, can tip the scales in the November elections.

### FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE CONSTITUTION AND BILL OF RIGHTS

A few comments on the extent and nature of *monopoly's repressive drive in our country*: Since 1954 the menace of pro-fascist reaction has receded somewhat. International factors as well as the election defeats administered to the McCarthyites and to the Administration in November, 1954, and subsequently some of the decisions of the Supreme Court, all played a role in this development.

But underlying all of these factors, and in some respects the decisive factor, has been a resurgence of powerful democratic expressions by the American people. These have been expressed in numerous activities and declarations—from the recent forthright stand by the American Association of University Professors on the right of Communists to teach, the frank admission by Acheson of the basic mistake of introducing the Loyalty Oath, the adherence

of Mrs. Roosevelt, Norman Thomas and A. J. Muste to the appeal for amnesty for the Smith Act prisoners, the various positions taken by the ADA, to the declarations of a host of influential trade unions, liberal and progressive organizations condemning the Smith Act, the Taft-Hartley Act, State Sedition and right-to-work laws, the McCarran-Walter Act and the McCarran Act.

This powerful democratic current which has been growing in the past years and to which our Party has made an important contribution, was likewise expressed in the far-reaching denunciation, from both conservative and liberal quarters, of the Government's action in padlocking the offices of the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker*.

Yet it would be a mistake to think that the struggle on this front has been decided. No one can minimize the ultra-reactionary significance of the Eastland-Jenner conspiracy and the rise of the White Citizens movement in the South; or the continuing indictments under the Smith Act, or the unsettled status of the truly pro-fascist McCarran Act.\* Nor can one underestimate the latest assault of the Administration on the Bill of Rights involved in the padlocking of the Party and *Daily Worker*, including the grave handicaps and disabilities which still prevail and prevent us from operating in a "normal" way, in accord with our constitutional rights.

No advocate of democratic liberties should forget the notorious statement issued by Brownell and J. Edgar Hoover from the Eisenhower summer headquarters at Denver, after the passage of the so-called Communist Control Act, in which they stated: "We shall now proceed to utterly destroy the Communist Party."

It is true the political climate within the country is changing, but the reactionary objective of monopoly and its political spokesmen still remains the same. The post-war process of militarization and of the "creeping" fascization of the State apparatus has not yet been reversed, but at best, only partially checked or deterred.

Nevertheless, the over-all favorable course of events, not only internationally, but also to some extent within our country, demonstrates that united democratic action and popular struggle to uphold and defend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights is bound

\* Since this report was delivered, the U.S. Supreme Court returned the case against the Communist Party under the McCarran Act to the Subversive Activities Control Board for reconsideration of what it called "tainted" testimony by informers Matusow, Crouch and Johnson.

to grow in the coming period and will become more effective.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE '56 ELECTIONS?

A final comment on the vital '56 elections: Insofar as the 1956 Presidential race is concerned, Eisenhower still has a commanding lead. He enjoys this lead thanks to the position of the national leadership of the Democratic Party (assisted by the Meany forces) in belittling Geneva and demanding increases in arms expenditures; to the manifesto of the Southern Democrats on interposition and nullification; to the "moderate" stand of Stevenson on many key issues; and to the miserable record of the Democratic-controlled Congress. All this has made it possible for the GOP to parade demagogically as the Party of peace and desegregation, and, to some extent, as the architects of peace-time prosperity.

The outcome of the November contest, however, is by no means a foregone conclusion. As the Minnesota and Wisconsin primaries have revealed, not only Stevenson, but also the GOP, is in trouble. The prolonged indecision of the Republican high command before they decided to include Nixon on the GOP ticket points up certain qualms that they hold regarding the merchandizing worth of Nixonism. The Eisenhower veto of the Farm Bill has still further complicated their problems. And the recent *Times* survey pointing out the failures and the low prestige of the Administration abroad in the sphere of foreign affairs underscores the GOP's vulnerability.

The emergence of these and other key issues in the '56 campaign shows that *it is fully possible to forge a democratic front mass movement and political combination powerful enough to exert tremendous influence on the course of the elections.* Given a strong and positive stand in support of peace and an uncompromising position on civil rights at the Democratic convention, a fighting crusade by the candidates, and above all by their supporters in the labor and people's movement, a Democratic presidential ticket and campaign could develop that might alter the entire election campaign and picture. This is true, particularly, considering the anti-Cadillac mood and militancy of labor, the powerful anti-GOP trends in the rural Midwest, the high fighting spirit of the Negro people, and the general strong peace sentiment and democratic currents existing in the country.

As of this moment, the prospects for such a platform, ticket, and campaign are far from being assured, to say the least. However, as events of the past few weeks emphasize anew, the situation is still fluid. Issues and movements are having increasing impact. The widespread fears evoked by the GOP intention to put Nixon "one heart-beat away from the White House"; the fact that Stevenson has been forced to modify his original stand on desegregation, and now calls for a ban on H bomb tests, as well as endorses the new UAW proposals for a UN program of aid to the under-developed countries based on the principles of peaceful co-existence and competition; the challenging nature and the wide popular response to the Kefauver candidacy; the statement by Clinton Anderson at the Physicists convention at Rochester suggesting the banning of inter-continental missiles; and the sharp and growing criticism of the Democratic majority in Congress by the ADA, the AFL-CIO, and the NAACP—all this indicates that it is not too late nor impossible for the labor-democratic forces in the nation to influence the course and outcome of the elections.

### HOW THE PEOPLE CAN WIN

In any event, among the major responsibilities and tasks facing our Party and all other progressives in the 1956 elections, I should now like to emphasize three:

1) In the existing situation, we and others of the Left associate ourselves forthrightly with labor's desire *to oust the Cadillac Cabinet—to defeat Nixon and the GOP, as well as the Dixiecrats.*

Therefore—and in accord with our prime objective of helping forge a broad and effective labor-democratic coalition that can exert growing political influence during and after the elections—we must now do all in our power to imbue labor and its democratic allies with the *will to win and with the know-how of how to win.*

The only realistic way to prevent a GOP presidential victory, to defeat the now serious menace of Nixonism, to oust the Cadillac Cabinet, and to accomplish this worthy objective in the interests of labor and the people, is:

*Not only* to oppose Benson's anti-farmer program, McKay's give-away of national resources, or Humphrey's tax relief for the rich (all of which most northern Democrats do, at least in words), *BUT* also to renounce Dulles' brink-of-war policies; to institute a

program of expanded East-West trade, peaceful negotiations, concrete steps for disarmament and for banning all nuclear weapons; to repudiate and nullify Brownell and Nixon's anti-labor attacks against the UAW, UE, and Mine-Mill; to stop the current Smith Act, McCarran Act and McCarran-Walter Act prosecutions against Communists and non-Communist progressives; to inaugurate and enforce a federal program of civil rights, including adequate provisions to guarantee the right to vote, stringent anti-lynch measures, and equal rights in education and employment; as well as an extensive federal program to vastly expand social security, housing, educational and minimum wage requirements and standards.

In pursuing and promoting this vital objective in the '56 elections, and in joining with the majority of the popular forces to ride herd on the elephant, we Communists and others of the Left do not intend to tail after the donkey. Moreover, in this crucial year the Left and progressive forces should recognize that the keystone of their work should be not only the defeat of the menace of Nixonism and the Dixiecrats. Above all *they should help build election coalitions and political alliances out of which something substantial and continuing will remain*, no matter what the results of next November. It is on this, rather than on the general merits of the major parties and candidates that we have differed with some of our friends of the Left.

2) In line with this, the Left and progressive forces should focus major attention on the need and possibilities of forging diverse labor-Negro-democratic front coalitions and alliances on congressional and state levels. This is especially urgent in regard to some 30 to 50 key congressional and senatorial contests where relatively favorable possibilities exist for defeating various rabid McCarthyites, Dixiecrats and anti-Geneva candidates and of electing certain congressmen who will be for labor, for civil rights and for peace, including a number of additional Negro representatives, as well as trade unionists. Such democratic movements, alignments, and coalitions can be formed that should be strong enough to bring more effective pressure to bear on the present session of Congress, to influence the course of current events, and to intervene and exert increasing pressure on the next administration and Congress, whatever its political complexion and composition may be.

## FOR A NEW POLITICAL ALIGNMENT

3) Simultaneously, we must bring forward much more concretely and systematically the necessity for crystallizing a new major political alignment in the country. This will find ever greater response among the masses, and in the first place among the workers, the bulk of the farmers, and the Negro people, who, while unprepared this election year to break with the two party system, nevertheless are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with both the Republican and the Democratic Parties.

It should not be forgotten that since 1948, when Truman was elected on the basis of the many promises made to the workers, farmers, and the Negro people, there has been the most dramatic demonstration of how the interests of the people are betrayed and election promises unfulfilled, irrespective of which Party controls the presidency and Congress.

In 1948 the Democrats captured both the presidency and Congress. In 1950 there was a Democratic president and a GOP Congress. In 1952 both the presidency and Congress were in the hands of the GOP; and since 1954 there has been a GOP president and a Democratic-controlled Congress. Yet, during all this time, the Taft-Hartley law remains on the books, and there has not been a single civil rights bill passed. Practically no social legislation favorable to the working people has been adopted. The Congressional witch-hunts have continued under both party labels, not to speak of the continuing colossal arms expenditures, and the sanction of a series of aggressive military pacts.

But this does not mean that the fight for a major re-alignment should be limited to mere agitation for a mass labor-farmer party. In addition to such agitation, which is long overdue, the Left needs to unfold a bold, practical, and realistic policy which takes into account the actual situation, the relation of forces, the battles that the people are ready and willing to engage in, and those forms and methods of independent political action which already exist. This means, for one thing, that more attention is required to help develop the great potential of the Committee on Political Education—the united national political arm of labor uniting the PAC, the LLPE, and all their subdivisions in each union, industry, and geographical and political subdivision.

This means, further, that the progressives should not be in-

different to the developing crisis in the Democratic Party. They should help implement Reuther's recent declaration that "The Democrats can't have the Eastlands and labor too." And, in conjunction with other popular forces, they should do all in their power to help isolate and defeat the Dixiecrats and the northern advocates of "interposition," "nullification," "gradualism," and "states' rights." All this can be done without fostering any illusions as to the possibility of converting the Democratic Party into a people's party.

In this struggle the economic and political interests of labor, the Negro people, and the family-sized farmers are closely interwoven, and the unity of these forces and the organization of a labor-farmer-Negro alliance is paramount. It is out of these struggles, which will markedly influence the course of the '56 elections, that many important political regroupings in and around the Democratic Party will be advanced and the Dixiecrat-GOP stranglehold on Congress can be undermined. And this will provide one of the big answers as to what extent and to what degree certain sectors of the Democratic Party and its adherents among the masses will become an integral part of the new anti-monopoly political alignment that is now in the process of development.

## II. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE PARTY'S WORK

Now I would like to briefly, if inadequately, examine the status and functioning of the Party in the past period, particularly with an eye to some of our weaknesses and mistakes.

Without doubt, the past period has been the most trying in our Party's history, and naturally it has also been one of the most difficult periods in the life of our country.

During the first phase of the cold war, from 1946 to 1951, our Party, in unison with many non-Communist workers and progressives, made significant contributions in resisting the imperialist Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and U.S. intervention in China; in opposing the Schwollenbach proposal for outlawing the CP as well as the pro-fascist Mundt-Nixon Bill; in defending Willie McGee, the Martinsville Seven, and Mrs. Rosa Lee In-

gram; and in actively supporting the big strikes of the miners, and the nation's railway, packing, and steel workers.

It is also a matter of fact and a source of pride that during the most recent period our Party has continued to display great courage and staunchness. Those of us who were deprived of the ability to actively participate in the work and leadership since July, 1951, salute all the brave fighters in and around our Party, and particularly our indomitable chairman, Bill Foster, and the other comrades, who together with him, constituted the national leadership. We recognize the extraordinary difficulties under which our Party has had to operate since July, 1951. And we appreciate no less the loyalty and steadfastness and the many noteworthy contributions which our Party made in this period, especially to help end the war in Korea and to turn the tide against McCarthyism, as well as the orientation towards pursuing a broad and flexible tactical line.

At the same time it is necessary to note that over the past years the Party has suffered heavy organizational losses and that its political influence has been lessened in many areas and fields. Furthermore, while the Party, directly or indirectly, has developed certain mass activity in the fight for peace, civil rights and civil liberties, with few exceptions it did not succeed in setting wide masses into motion. Moreover, it exercised little influence in most of the recent strikes and its role in the historic AFL-CIO merger has been extremely unsatisfactory.

### **WAS THE DEGREE OF ISOLATION INEVITABLE?**

The causes for the Party's weakened base and its increased isolation—in some cases relative, in others absolute—are largely to be found in adverse objective factors. These are a consequence, in the first place, of the sharp, costly, and continuing political attacks and repressions against the Party, the Left wing, and other democratic forces. Certainly, we must not obscure nor forget these problems and difficulties and handicaps, including those which still operate and will continue to plague us for a long time to come, *i.e.*, the de facto illegalization of the Party in basic industry and certain other fields of employment.

But the question arises: was it inevitable, in view of the post-war growth of monopoly reaction in the country, that the Party should become so isolated? Or, so to say: was it impossible, even

under conditions of rising pro-fascist reaction in the USA, for the working class vanguard to maintain and develop much broader and more effective mass ties and political influence? The answer must be: No. For as experience has shown, there are certain situations and areas in our country where we have been able to surmount the sharp and recurring attacks of the enemy and have continued to exert appreciable mass political influence.

What are some of the subjective factors, weaknesses, errors, which made it easier for the monopolists and their political representatives to weaken and isolate us over the past years, especially since the late '40's and even more so after 1951?

Obviously during this period of heightened post-war reaction, all of the basic, deep-seated and long-standing weaknesses and shortcomings of the Party came home to roost with a vengeance. This is particularly true in respect to the Party's historic neglect of mass work in most of the decisive unions of the AFL and among some of the most important CIO unions; to the fact that over the past decade our Party has been afflicted with a deeply-ingrained Left sectarian approach to united front relationships and tactics, and frequently became a prisoner of Left wing centers in the peace, Negro people's, civil liberties, and trade union movements; and to the strong and persistent tendency in the Party to apply the experiences of other parties and the science of Marxism in a mechanical and doctrinaire fashion—all of which inadvertently gave aid and comfort to the slander that we are "foreign agents."

These decades-old weaknesses made it more difficult for our Party to most effectively withstand monopoly's sharpened post-war offensive and to retain—let alone expand—our mass ties and political influence under conditions of severe repression.

Yet we cannot ascribe the negative aspects of the Party's work in the recent period merely, or chiefly, to the general shortcomings which we inherited from the past, or even to the mistakes that we ourselves made in previous periods. To understand where we erred in the post-war situation, and why, we need to examine, first of all, the erroneous judgments and tactical mistakes of this specific period in the context of the given time, place, and concrete circumstances.

It is from this viewpoint that I would now like to indicate briefly what seems to me to have been some errors of judgment

in our political estimate at various moments. Then, a little farther on, I wish to note certain tactical errors which flowed from, or were made in connection with, that which was one-sided and faulty in certain analyses.

### **POLICIES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE**

Take, for example, the Party's estimate of the new danger of war that arose after the end of World War II. By and large, the general conclusions we drew at the 1945 convention regarding the aggressive post-war role of American imperialism, and the main political line we projected, have proved correct. The development and course of Wall Street's cold war, interspersed with the hot war in Korea, affirm this beyond question.

At the same time, it must be admitted that there have been not a few defects and some errors in estimating given moments and in developing an effective tactical line in the struggle for peace. While we repeatedly asserted that World War III is not inevitable, the fact is that we frequently tended to evaluate certain war preparations and threats of Washington as if a new world war was not only possible—but almost imminent. This was so at various intervals in 1948-49, during one phase of the war in Korea, and again in 1954, around the time of the conference on Indo-China.

It should be stated here that those who argued in the past, or on the basis of the new and changed world situation now unfolding, that there never was nor is a war danger—are wrong. Their view that peace is "inevitable" was and is no less harmful than the view that war is inevitable. In both cases the Party and the people are lulled into passivity and fatalism, instead of facing up to the realities of the situation, to organizing and mobilizing the broadest sectors of the people in the struggle for peace.

Our past errors arose, in good part, from the fact that while resolutely opposing Wall Street's expansionist program and bellicose policies, we did not consistently and convincingly show the growing disparity between the imperialist aims of U.S. monopoly and its inability to realize its predatory objectives. Also, in this connection, we did not sufficiently emphasize and understand the growing rivalries and conflicts between the major imperialist powers, nor did we properly assess the sharpening inner

differences and contradictions within monopoly capital in the USA and how to take advantage of this in order to build a broader peace movement.

Despite our statements regarding the profound world significance of the armistice in Korea and the negotiated peace agreement in Indo-China, our Party did not draw the full conclusions from the big and favorable changes in international relations which these events signaled. Otherwise how can we explain that in 1954 the Party's program\* coupled its observation that Wall Street had "lost the immediate opportunities to launch an anti-Soviet war" with the prediction that in 1954 the country was confronted with an immediate war threat?

Certainly not until the Bandung Conference did the Party appreciate the new role of the peoples of Asia and Africa and the unprecedented and significant role that most of the nations of these areas are now playing in the fight for peace. Also it must be said that for some time up to the Geneva Summit meeting—including the immediate preceding period—there were strong tendencies to underestimate the ability of the peoples to compel the Eisenhower Administration, on the basis of the new and more favorable world relationship of forces and the powerful peace sentiment in the U.S., to enter into peaceful negotiations with the "East."

The fact is that even as late as the middle of 1955 our Party still found the thinking of many in its ranks based on an analysis which saw the only major difference in the camp of U.S. monopoly capital as that between "those who want war now, and those who want war when ready." Needless to say, such an estimate made it difficult to convince masses of the possibility of achieving, under the existing conditions, a protracted period of peaceful co-existence.

### **ESTIMATE OF THE FASCIST DANGER**

There is no doubt that errors in judgment and analysis as regards the war danger also at times influenced the Party's estimate of the fascist danger. Starting with the late 1940's, our Party correctly emphasized that monopoly capital—in pursuance of its "American Century" policy and its related war preparations, and,

\* *The American Way to Jobs, Peace, Equal Rights and Democracy*. New Century Publishers, New York. 5c.

in order to cope with the strong peace and anti-fascist sentiments of the American people, more and more had recourse to repressive and pro-fascist measures.

And during 1950-51, in connection with the war in Korea, the enactment of the McCarran Act and the Vinson decision, coupled with the loyalty oaths and the Taft-Hartley Act—we Communists correctly pointed out that the danger of fascism was increasing. But even then, and since 1951, more than once the Party overestimated the scope, level, and tempo of development of the process of fascization underway. For instance, in our statement on June 4, 1951, while we stressed that World War III and fascism were not inevitable, actually we placed things as being a few minutes before midnight. Certainly, the statement of the National Committee that the Vinson Decision signified “a wholly new situation” was open to misinterpretation.

And some of the organizational steps the Party took at the time were bound to disorient many, as indeed they did. Among other things, too, there was a tendency to equate the semi-illegalization of the Party with the beginning, or the first stage, of fascism. At the same time there arose a gross underestimation of the necessity and possibilities to struggle to restore and maintain the legality of the party.

Clearly, it was imperative in 1950-52—when the war in Korea was raging, when the McCarran Act was adopted, when the Vincon Decision came down, that then, as at all times, the Party ensure its ability to function under all conditions despite the unconstitutional curbs upon its working-class political activities. But it did not flow from this, nor was it correct, that the Party take such drastic measures as it did in regard to most of its leadership. Certainly it was incorrect to have maintained this system of leadership, without any modification, for such a prolonged period. Equally, it was wrong that the Party adopted such arbitrary and undemocratic measures as it did in 1951 in the process of verifying the Party cadre and membership—measures, by the way, that reduced the Party membership by one-third.

Moreover, it was not correct, and in fact was very harmful, that for some time after 1951 the Party abandoned virtually all of its legal positions and avenues for open mass work; and also that until quite recently it did not raise the question of defend-

ing the Party and its constitutional liberties to the level of a major task deserving top priority. Let it be borne in mind that this was no small partisan question, but one which adversely affected all of our united front relationships and exerted a negative influence on the course of the anti-McCarthyite struggle. Even now, I would stress, we are only beginning to change this unfortunate state of affairs and to place the question of developing the broadest united front defense of the First Amendment as a fundamental national and democratic task.

In order to establish the fullest clarity on this point, it would be well, at this juncture, to consider some aspects of the 1954 Program. There is no doubt that one of the most important positive contributions of the Party's Program was the sharpness with which it raised the danger of McCarthyism and the impact it had among the masses in facilitating the important rebuffs the McCarthyites received in the 1954 elections. But the program contained some errors which should be brought to light.

Undeniably, the danger of McCarthyism became most acute in the period of the sharpest world tensions, especially during the Korean war. But was it correct to conclude, as the Program did, that with the easing of the international situation this danger inevitably was bound to become more menacing? It is true, of course, that with every defeat and setback suffered by U.S. imperialism, the most chauvinist and ultra-reactionary circles of monopoly lose their heads, become more adventurist, and lead not from positions of strength but from positions of desperation. This holds true for all aspects of policy—foreign and domestic.

But it is also true that defeats\* and setbacks compel major sectors of Big Business, including very reactionary circles, to reappraise their tactics, methods, and timing. And, as now, they seek to maneuver and draw back from, or postpone, the biggest of all gambles. Moreover, it is likewise a fact that in such situations, as developed after Korea and Indo-China, the popular forces acquire greater self-confidence and offer greater resistance to the offensive of monopoly in all spheres, including on the home front.

It would appear that a primary factor in the analysis set forth in the program as to why the danger of McCarthyism was supposed to become sharper as a result of certain favorable international developments was because of the view prevalent in 1954 regarding

an early and major economic crisis. I shall deal with this later, though here I would remark parenthetically that unquestionably, the onset of a major cyclical crisis *will* impel important sectors of monopoly to seek a fascist solution of the crisis. Undoubtedly, too, there will be big class struggles. But it is far from inevitable that the coming crisis—whenever it matures—will usher in a revolutionary situation. U.S. monopoly is still able to maneuver, to grant certain concessions to the masses, and it is also realistic to assume that in the course of the sharpening struggles that will unfold, it is definitely possible for the popular masses to prevent the ruling monopolies from establishing their open and most reactionary dictatorship.

I would also note in passing that even in mid-1954 it was not correct to lump the Eisenhower forces and McCarthyism together. Even then the struggle within the ranks of Big Capital and between the different wings of the GOP—notwithstanding all its limitations—was such that it was wrong to treat Eisenhower and McCarthy as if the Administration and the GOP were one homogeneous grouping. It was also incorrect to contend that the major differences within monopoly capital would be reflected primarily through only one of the two major parties. Nor was it correct to equate the over-all danger of fascism with the acute menace of McCarthyism. For McCarthyism was, and is, only *one* manifestation of the fascist danger—although at times, the gravest danger.

We should also have given, and must now give, more attention to the sinister role of the Eastlands, McClellans, Walters, etc., and of the GOP McCarthyites in white collars, *i.e.*, the Nixons and Brownells. And we should have analyzed more basically, and must still do so, the relation between the post-war rise of the fascist danger and the post-war growth of state monopoly capital and the accompanying processes of the fascization of the state apparatus and the militarization of the country. This began under the Truman Administration and has been carried forward under the Eisenhower Administration and is today, at best, only partially checked.

In addition to the sectarian influences in our estimate of the fascist danger connected with certain errors in estimating the war danger and the imminence of a cyclical economic crisis, etc., I also believe that in the struggle against the menace of fascism,

we under-estimated in practice the nationwide, mass strength of American democratic traditions, sentiments, and processes. I believe we underplayed the latent power and mass fighting resistance, as well as the unique role of the trade unions—and this despite the Meanys. Also I believe we overlooked the specific role of the struggles between and within the two major parties—as well as certain peculiarities of our governmental structure—which operate, indirectly, as a certain impediment to the drive of the most reactionary monopoly circles towards establishing a full-fledged police state system. Likewise, I believe we seriously underestimated the salutary effects of world democratic opinion, including the favorable changes in international relations, on the domestic situation.

In saying all this, it is necessary to repeat, that despite the recent relaxation of international tensions, and notwithstanding the very important rebuffs and partial checks given to Knowland, Nixon, Dulles, Eastland and the McCarthyites, the danger of fascism still exists and is far from liquidated.

#### ON IMMINENCE OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

The third and last question I wish to touch concerning certain errors in analysis and judgment which we have made since 1945 is our repeated over-estimation of the imminence of a new cyclical economic crisis.

During 1945 and again in 1949, our Party—basing itself on a one-sided estimate of economic data and factors, and applying the Marxist theory on economic crisis dogmatically—wrongly concluded that a major economic crisis was then imminent.

In connection with the 1953-54 decline, we again erroneously evaluated the course of the economic development and perspectives. This view also found expression in the Party's 1954 Program which considered that the decline would inevitably give rise to a major economic depression in 1955-56.

While taking note of the past role of colossal arms expenditures in delaying the outbreak of the long deferred cyclical economic crisis, this analysis minimized the current economic effects of the continuing arms program, as well as overlooked other factors of the economic picture—including the extent and effects of fixed capital investments and of the level of commercial and residential construction; the scope of unsatisfied or "pent up" consumer demand,

and the temporary mitigating role of government regulated consumer credits and of the government's tax program (rebates, amortization, lower excess profits); as well as the possibility of further technical advance in some sectors of the economy.

This faulty analysis, like those of the previous period (1945-49), was very harmful. It caused us to exaggerate the process of radicalization of the masses and diverted the Party from advancing or properly stressing certain concrete economic and political demands then and now confronting the masses, irrespective of exactly when a major economic crisis develops. It placed exaggerated emphasis on converting government subsidized or privately-owned facilities engaged in arms production to peacetime production, and by-passed the pressing need of nationalizing certain industries. It adversely affected our tactical line generally, and especially our united front relations and work in the trade unions. Above all, this analysis of the economic situation led the Party to consider that in 1956 there would be a *full-blown economic crisis*, which in turn would confront the country with the *immediate threat of fascism and war*.

One of the lessons that has to be learned from these repeated mistakes in the last decade—I do not speak of previous periods—is the necessity to judge economic and political facts and trends factually and objectively, not to be swayed by other opinions, including those of diverse Marxist economists who have not made a thorough study of all the economic factors and trends in the United States, and to develop our theoretical work on economic questions to the high level it merits.

### THE LEFT AND THE SPLIT IN THE CIO

Now I wish to pass on and deal with a couple of tactical mistakes, which were directly connected at times and to one degree or another, with the errors in judgment and analysis which our Party made in respect to the war danger, the fascist danger, and the economic situation; and which in turn further aggravated and contributed to our Party's weaknesses and isolation.

While the advanced workers opposed and resisted the expulsion of the Left-led unions from the CIO, they did not wage an *all-out* ideological, political and organizational fight either to try to prevent this split in labor's ranks, or to heal this damaging

breach in the trade union movement as soon as possible after the expulsions had taken place. Prior to the expulsions, the Left approached the struggle in the labor movement against the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine as if war was virtually around the corner. And the Party compounded this mistake by continuing a very harmful, untenable, and sectarian policy. We developed the struggle for peace in the trade union movement in a doctrinaire and inflexible manner, not taking into account the level of understanding of the workers. Furthermore, we made foreign policy issues the acid test of all united front relationships, and neglected the possibility of maintaining certain left-center coalitions on other important issues, including key economic questions.

The advanced sector of the Left never learned how to combine its own principled and correct position on a number of these questions with the necessity to follow a flexible tactic in the trade union movement, even as some of the experiences of the French and Italian Marxists showed was possible and necessary in the CGT and ICL.

After the expulsions of the eleven national unions from the CIO, the left did not fully appreciate the gravity and consequences of what was then taking place; and on more than one occasion, the advanced workers continued to press for the adoption of certain sectarian policies in the unions which aggravated the sharp breaks and ruptures that developed between the Left and diverse Center forces.

During this period, the Left failed to estimate correctly the relation of forces in the labor movement. It did not sufficiently see the ebb and flow of the movement. It tended to exaggerate its strength in the CIO. It did not sufficiently realize that much of its mass influence derived from its participation in broad left-center coalitions.

Failure of the Left leaders and of the Party to recognize these facts of life and to seriously re-examine the new relation of forces was a factor in all the sectarian errors made and contributed to weakening Left-center coalition relations.

Some comrades may ask: What is all the commotion about? Could anyone have guaranteed that the split in the CIO could have been avoided? This is not the question. The real question is: did we do everything possible to prevent the split? Did we work in a

manner and pursue such policies that would make it more difficult for the split to occur? To this, we must answer: No.

The split in the CIO was precipitated through a number of issues on which the Left could have maneuvered and reacted more flexibly. But the Left's fight-back policy suffered from all the sectarian tendencies that hampered its united front work in the mass trade unions led by the more conservative and Right-wing reformist and Social Democratic leaders. Moreover, the split was, in fact, already prepared and under way, when the Left allowed itself to be isolated and defeated through the break-up of various Left-center coalitions in a number of the CIO unions where the Left-progressives were strong. Certainly, the situation in the N.M.U., the Transport Workers and District No. 65 come to mind.

A contributing factor to the split in the CIO, the slowness in taking measures to try to overcome this division—was no doubt the practical abandonment of the Left's initiative in the fight for trade union unity. This went hand in hand with speculation in certain quarters about the desirability of eventually establishing a "third" labor federation. Already in the late '40's, there was an open expression that under the existing circumstances (the war danger, the menace of fascism, the going over of most of the AFL and CIO leaders to support of the cold war, etc.), trade union unity and united labor action would be against the interests of the workers. Instead of becoming the champions of trade union unity, and thus coming closer to the rank and file and certain leaders of the AFL and CIO and helping to set the workers and their local organizations in motion, the negative attitude of many Party leaders, including various trade union cadres, towards labor unity made it easier for the reformist trade union leaders to isolate the Left still further.

Moreover, the extremely harmful nature of this anti-unity approach can be seen in the subsequent fact, that, in the main, the advanced workers did not play an active and influential role in helping to bring about the merger of the AFL and CIO. Even after organic unity became a reality, a section of the Left, inclusive of certain Party forces, failed to grasp the very positive achievement that this historic step represented, and kept pointing to the dangers, and to the obvious fact that the labor reformists at the

head of AFL and CIO remained reformists. And some went so far as to assert that the AFL and CIO were "labor fronts," and that the merger was engineered by the State Department.

What they did not see is that labor unity—far from being a plot on the part of Big Business in pursuance of its general policies and its foreign policy specifically—was, in fact, spurred on as a result of the growing attacks on the part of the employers. The merger reflected, to one degree or another, the desires and pressures of the rank and file to achieve greater unity and strength in the big economic and political struggles that the workers were being compelled to wage.

### ELECTORAL POLICY IN '48

There is, too, the question of the formation of the Progressive Party in 1948, which also widened the cleavage in the CIO and weakened the ties between the Leftwing and the mainstream of the labor movement. At this point I do not want to argue whether or not an independent peace ticket should have been entered and developed in the '48 elections. Personally, I believe it would have been correct and I consider that both the objective conditions and certain subjective factors warranted such a bold move. Certainly, the impact of Wallace's break with the Administration over the Truman Doctrine and the widespread resentment in labor's ranks over the strike-breaking role of the Administration in the miners' and railwaymen's strike—gave a big impetus in 1947 and early '48 to the progressive trend towards independent political action and for organizing an independent presidential ticket in opposition to the Truman and Dewey candidacies and bipartisan war program. However, I also believe it was erroneous and harmful to support the formation of the P.P. *as a third party*, and not to have taken into account certain changes in the electoral situation which developed in the final months of the campaign. Insofar as the position of our Party on the question is concerned, I assume a particular responsibility.

But the fact remains that whether the Progressive Party came on the electoral scene as a party or a ticket, life—and the election returns in November, 1948—clearly revealed that the PP had no promising future in the political life of the country. Not to recognize this then, and to entertain the illusion that the contrary might be

the case, was not only a mistaken political judgment per se, but also made it increasingly difficult for the Left to re-orient and to forge the broad democratic people's coalition which it advocated.

While the Party leadership modified its position on this question in 1949 and '50, as in the Lehman-Dulles senatorial contest—we did not draw all the conclusions from our mistakes, did not place the matter for definitive correction in the 1950 elections. While the 1952 Draft resolution attempted to do this, sectarian attitudes in the leadership and in the Party blunted the necessary corrections in the Resolution as finally adopted. Consequently, remnants of this dual policy were expressed in some of the official reports at the August 1954 national election conference, and are still to be found in the practical work of some Party organizations.

### PERSPECTIVES OF THE PARTY PROGRAM

But, on the whole, the policy projected for the 1954 elections represented a turn as far as our electoral policy is concerned. The tactical line set forth in the 1954 Program was a major contribution designed to re-orient the Party and the whole Left to restore and extend our mass ties and influence in the mainstream of the labor and people's movements. There is no doubt that the Party Program played a very positive role in the 1954 elections and in helping turn the tide against McCarthyism.

It is precisely because of this positive estimate of the role of the Program in 1954, and the fact that it was so widely distributed under extremely difficult conditions, that it is necessary to take note of certain errors and wrong analyses that are to be found in the Program, not the least in respect to what was envisioned for 1956.

The Program approached 1956 as the first of three stages of the tactical and strategic course projected to check and defeat extreme reaction and to effect the transition from a people's anti-trust government to socialism. The Program contended that the Eisenhower Administration represented an immediate threat of fascism and war and that it must and *could* be replaced by a non-Truman type Democratic Administration, resting on a broad coalition, capable of blocking the immediate danger of war and fascism, and of moving forward from where the New Deal left off.

It is true that the Eisenhower Administration, from its incep-

tion, pursued an aggressive, imperialist course that aggravated the war danger, especially in the Far East, and also that in '53 and early '54, it appeased McCarthy and fostered certain aspects of McCarthyism (e.g., Brownell's anti-subversion program and attacks on Truman). Hence, it was necessary, particularly in '54, to boldly advance the task of defeating this reactionary Administration, popularly known as the Cadillac Cabinet.

But in raising this worthy objective, the Program made a number of mistaken judgments by inferring that '56 offered an alternative between war and fascism under the GOP *and* a new New Deal under the Democrats. It minimized the need and possibility of exerting mass pressure upon the Eisenhower Administration and influencing governmental policy. Yet, as we know, the Eisenhower Administration was compelled to negotiate an armistice in Korea, to break with McCarthy and to go to Geneva. The Program further underestimated the sharp inner contradictions and differences then taking place within Big Business circles over McCarthyism and the methods and tactics of implementing Wall Street's foreign policy, as well as erroneously concluded that the less aggressive circles of Big Capital would align themselves with and express their position through only *one* of the major parties, *i.e., supposedly* through the Democratic Party.

Moreover, the outlook projected for '56 estimated the relationship of class forces within and around the Democratic Party unrealistically, including the role of the key subjective factors. In fact, the illusionary prognosis of the Program for '56 relied primarily on the emergence of a devastating economic crisis and mass spontaneity to bring about a new political alignment and popular majority in the country.

Not until mid-'55 was this wrong orientation more or less rectified. Meanwhile, and among other things, the course projected in the Program for '56 fostered an attitude that it was necessary to defeat the GOP at all costs, and this in turn retarded the efforts of the Left to influence the course of the Administration and to most effectively influence developments in and around important sectors of the Democratic Party on key issues.

If it is true that what the Program projected for '56 (the first phase of the three stage strategy outlined in the Program as the American Road to Socialism) was, and is, somewhat faulty, it is

no less true that the three stages concept of the road to socialism as a whole suffers from certain serious defects and is, to say the least, very schematic.

### OTHER POLITICAL AND TACTICAL ERRORS

Time does not permit consideration of a number of other serious political and tactical mistakes that our Party made in the past period. For instance, there was and is the serious tailing, lagging behind, marked by Right opportunist passivity, in the struggle for Negro rights; as well as the pronounced Left sectarian attitudes displayed towards the NAACP and the Negro church movement; plus the errors made in the internal campaign against white chauvinism in 1949-53 which distorted and hampered the unfolding of the necessary *mass* struggle against the pernicious influence and practices of white chauvinism.

Also, mention should be made of the fact that in the efforts of the Party leadership to re-orient the Party after 1952, to bring the full weight and influence of the Left into the mainstream of the labor and people's movements, this generally correct orientation was resisted and carried out clumsily and sometimes in a very sectarian manner.

Very little attention was given to maintaining and extending the Party's ties with diverse, honest, and influential Left-progressive non-party forces as we effected the change in tactics. And not everywhere did the Party appreciate that while the course of events constantly makes it necessary to review policies and organizations, including the status and role of various Left "centers," it is one thing to help transform, merge, or dissolve this or that organization that may have outlived its usefulness. But it is an entirely different matter to do this unilaterally, without consultation with non-party progressives, or to negate the role of the Left wing and to weaken one's relations with diverse progressive forces on the Left, even if they don't see eye to eye with us on all questions.

This partial consideration of some aspects of the Party's work and policies over the past period, particularly in respect to certain of our mistakes, is, at best, very fragmentary and inadequate. The ensuing discussions in the N. C. will undoubtedly supplement and modify some of the tentative observations set forth. Obviously, too, a rounded out and a more definitive evaluation of the past

decade, especially in regard to both the positive and negative sides of our Party's role, will have to await the collective judgment of our entire Party, above all at our next convention.

When the over-all assessment is finally made, I am certain that in addition to critically estimating our errors and weaknesses, as is incumbent on us at this juncture, the Party will not overlook the positive and some of the outstanding features in our work in this period, *i.e.*, the steadfastness of the Party in face of continuing repressions; the steeling and growing maturity of our membership and leadership, and the fact that not only did our Party firmly oppose and resist Wall Street's post-war imperialist offensive, but also it made a number of sterling contributions which encouraged, alerted, and helped mobilize growing sectors of the American people to give battle to the McCarthyites, the Dixiecrats, and the atomaniacs.

### MAIN CHARACTER OF THE ERRORS: LEFT SECTARIANISM

Be this as it may, from even a preliminary examination of the past period, it is amply clear that whatever right opportunist tendencies were manifested reflecting the prevalent opportunism in the labor movement—nevertheless *most* of the erroneous analyses and tactical mistakes our Party has made since 1945 have been chiefly of a *Left sectarian character*. If we don't understand this, we will understand nothing about one of the main causes and effects of our isolation in this period. We would be unable to draw the necessary conclusions to enable our Party to move forward and exercise the great political and organizational initiative and leadership of which it is fully capable—and which the times call for and make feasible.

At this point it would be in place to consider, even if only in passing, *why* did it take so long for our Party to draw the aforementioned lessons from its past experiences and activity? This question is very much in order, not the least because during the late '40's we recognized and endeavored to correct some of the mistakes of that period; and subsequently, especially after the '52 elections, the Party leadership made a big effort to re-orient the Party and pursue a broader and more flexible tactical line.

Among the reasons, perhaps the following have some bearing:

- 1) Operating under great external pressures and difficulties and

in our determination to give no quarter to the offensive of monopoly reaction, and to move to the counter-attack—we frequently became impatient and forgot that it is the task of the vanguard to lead and mobilize broad masses; and that the independent activity of the vanguard and its supporters, no matter how brave and heroic, can never be a substitute for the concerted activity of the masses and their decisive organizations.

2) Because of our costly experience with Browder revisionism, in the early post-war years we were prone to concentrate our main fire against Right opportunism. Subsequently, and as the Left danger in our ranks became ever more pronounced, many tended to blunt our struggle against it by waging a “balanced” struggle on two fronts, an “even-handed” struggle against both Right and Left opportunism.

3) It is true that we improved the collective leadership in our Party following the emergency convention of '45, consulted frequently with the leading Party active in varied fields, and made certain headway in developing a measure of criticism and self-criticism. But the facts are that as the attacks on our Party mounted and the unity of the Party itself was at stake, sharp political differences which arose in the leadership were often temporized and left unresolved for long periods, and inner-Party democracy and the corrective influence of the collective views of the Party membership and sympathizers was narrowed.

### **COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND INNER-PARTY DEMOCRACY**

And in the more recent years when the Party leadership was dispersed and the Party as a whole worked under the most trying and complex conditions—collective leadership and inner-Party democracy became even more severely hampered and distorted, particularly as sectors of the leadership on all levels were sorely restricted in their relationships with many of our trade union and Negro cadres and members, not to speak of with non-Party masses. In such circumstances, collective leadership in formulating policy, and the collective process of clarifying and correcting errors and mistakes, especially those of long standing, became more difficult and protracted.

One of the central conclusions our Party and the N. C. must draw from this situation, and one of the main pre-requisites for

rectifying these and other mistakes, is that we must take decisive measures to widen our contacts and exchange opinions regularly with non-party masses *and* likewise ensure that collective leadership and responsibility is developed *continuously* throughout our Party on the widest possible basis.

We must find the ways and means, whatever the objective conditions, to confer with, listen to, and jointly hammer out all major policy and tactical questions in consultation with broader circles of Party *and* non-Party leaders and masses.

This essential procedure and practice needs to be accompanied by a systematic development, on all levels of the Party, of genuine and deep-going criticism and self-criticism, of correction and self-correction—both by the Party collective and by individual Party leaders and members. In creating the conditions for the freest expression of criticism of the Party's work on all levels, we then have the right to expect and demand from every Party member and every Party leader, on all levels, that each and every one of us start with a deep-going self-critical examination of our own mistakes and a frank facing up to the question of what each of us have done to help improve and advance the work of the Party.

What I would particularly like to emphasize is not merely the imperative necessity of ensuring that democratic centralism become a “two-way street,” but that we focus special attention on creating an atmosphere in our Party where individual leaders and members feel free to dissent from the majority and to submit alternative and “unorthodox” policies or proposals.

The only restraint or limits the Party should place on individuals and a minority is that they submit to the collective judgment and decisions of the majority, and that in the process of free and critical discussion, the Party is not turned into a mere debating society or used as a forum for propagating bourgeois ideas.

If we can achieve this, we will add something new and healthy and constructive to our whole concept and practice of criticism and self-criticism, of inner-party democracy and collective leadership. As a consequence, Party unity and discipline will be reinforced, will become an actuality, not a formality, and the Party will be strengthened, will earn the confidence of wide masses, and its political influence will grow.

### III. TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES

The big and pressing question is—what is required today to enable our Party to measure up to its gigantic responsibilities in this election year of great decision, and to help the Party break out of its relative isolation?

Obviously, there is no simple answer. The road ahead is not an easy one. Together with developing inner-Party democracy to the maximum and mapping out correct policies, we must make a more determined effort to go among the people and participate more effectively in their mass activity and movements. There is no therapy like mass work and struggle.

We must also take a fresh look at and help solve many of the organizational problems facing our Party, especially those confronting our membership in the shops and mass organizations. These and many other questions have to be hammered out collectively and firm decisions taken to guarantee correct policies and correct leadership.

Here I wish to stress, if only in a capsule fashion, a few of the most important political and tactical approaches which need to be further explored and developed to enable the Party to more effectively discharge its great tasks now and on the morrow.

#### PROMOTE UNITED FRONT RELATIONS AND ALLIANCES

At the very heart of the problem lies the question of taking full advantage of the new and favorable trends and re-groupings now beginning to unfold in the merged labor movement, in liberal and social democratic circles, in the broad and loose peace movement, in the farmers organizations, and in the Negro people's movement—all of which open up new and greater opportunities for promoting united action and for crystalizing broad democratic movements and coalitions.

Certainly, as our estimate of the present political situation in the country served to point up, we need to be alert to, cultivate and help shape, the healthiest trends and re-alignments now emerging in the country. We need to boldly seek out and establish new

contacts and united front relations and alliances, especially in the labor and Negro people's movements. And in particular this should govern our approach to the crucial November elections, which becomes increasingly the focal point of all political struggle in the country.

To enable the Party to move forward most rapidly and to strengthen its mass contacts and multiply its political influence—it is equally necessary to create a new understanding on how the Party exercises its vanguard role in the present conditions where the Party, in the main, is largely semi-legal or illegal, *and* where big mass labor and popular organizations exist and broad mass movements are unfolding. In these circumstances, primary emphasis must be placed on drastically improving the content and modifying the forms and methods of work of our members in existing mass organizations and movements; on how to give more effective political leadership to the masses in and around the decisive organizations of labor, the Negro people, farmers, youth and women.

Here there are two cardinal and inter-related questions that should be stressed—while striving at all times to come forward as the best representatives and builders of the mass organizations of the people, and participating in all genuinely progressive coalitions and movements, we Communists should also endeavor at all times to imbue our shopmates and associates with a class-conscious, a socialist outlook and understanding.

Secondly: it is essential that we put an end to certain sectarian and harmful practices that alienate the Left from many workers and other potential allies—namely, the general indefensible and frequent disregard of trade union democracy and discipline. Likewise, the Left forces in the unions should avoid giving support to various old concepts of “oppositions” and so-called “rank and file” movements that are narrow, and do not even embrace the majority of the left and progressive forces, and tend to separate them from the majority of the workers and bypass the established union machinery and procedures which exist in the industrial unions in the most basic industries.

At the same time, and complementing the above, to enhance the Party's vanguard role, we have to devise new ways and means to enable the Party to come forward publicly more frequently in its own name, with its views and proposals, and in such a manner

as to provide our members, especially workers, with a measure of protection against the undemocratic restrictions on their right to a job.

In this connection, and besides the added and extraordinary importance which attaches to the circulation and use of our press and literature, it is necessary to encourage the establishment of a variety of united front mediums of public expression in which both Communists and non-Communists can appear regularly.

Likewise, we have to take advantage of the many opportunities existing for the Party to establish a host of new contacts and working relations, formal and informal, with tens of thousands of individual labor, liberal, and social democratic leaders and rank and file members, and with many mass organizations, including trade unions, on such issues as the defense of the constitutional liberties of the Party and the Bill of Rights for all Americans.

#### **ATTENTION TO ORGANIZATIONAL WORK**

To reinforce our political leadership and influence in all spheres and on all levels, another vital question merits attention: The whole concept of Party organization, of organizational work and responsibility, in its fullest political sense, has to be put on an entirely new footing.

In the past period, due to the extreme difficulty in which the Party leadership functioned, a large percentage of our leaders were separated from the daily operative work and from close contact with trade union cadres and members. Leadership was given, much of the time, in articles, memos, letters, and documents. Inadvertently, the concept was nourished that if the Party was given or had a correct political line—the rest would follow.

As all of us know, the hammering out of a correct political line and perspective is indispensable. Yet all of us must remember that after a sound line is mapped out, organization decides everything, including the fate of the line itself. And certainly today, when the country is faced with a crucial election, when the problems of consolidating and strengthening the Party organizationally and politically are so acute, when the question of organizing mass campaigns, united front movements and struggles is so imperative, we have to imbue the entire Party, starting with the National Committee, with a new appreciation of the vital importance of political-organizational work.

#### **FOR A MASS PARTY OF SOCIALISM**

Not the least important of the new and serious problems we should concern ourselves with as we probe and re-assess the present status and future of our Party—is the question that keeps coming to the forefront in respect to the possibility of organizing a new and broader mass party of socialism.

One of the unique aspects of political and social trends in the U.S. in recent years is the revitalization and growth of a number of socialist-oriented and pro-Marxist currents and groupings. What explains such a development during a period marked by the sharpest repression against our Party and severe attacks on democratic rights generally?

It is explained, first of all, by the inspirational influence exerted by the historic victories of socialism and national liberation, especially by the emergence of socialism as a world system.

Second: these currents have been stimulated by the growing political maturity of a considerable number of left-progressives who, since the end of World War II, have become sharply disillusioned with the two-party system and with the capitalist economic system and structure that underlies it.

Third: precisely because of the vicious onslaught against our Party, some socialist-minded people have sought other channels, perhaps safer or less vulnerable, for Marxist expression.

Finally: there is no doubt that some socialist-oriented individuals looked elsewhere than to our Party because of honest differences, and not a few have been repelled because of certain dogmatic and sectarian concepts and methods in our Party, as well as our not so infrequent rigid intolerance of “outside” criticism.

Whatever may have been our attitude in the past, we American Communists, on the basis of our own experience, have come to realize that certain developments in our own country require a “new look.” And this prompts us to state unequivocally that we can have only the most positive approach to all honest socialist and Marxist-oriented groupings and individuals, whatever our differences may be on certain tactical and programmatic questions. We share the aspirations of many of these forces for a mass party of socialism in our country. We, too, want to create the conditions for such a necessary and historic development.

We must admit that, in the main, this has not been our approach in the past. We Communists underestimated the scope and character of this many-sided pro-socialist development and its possibilities for the American working class. Some tended to see only the various rightist social-democratic opportunists and the unreconstructed Trotskyists who were and are out to pervert Marxism and to exploit the difficulties of our Party, in the manner of vultures.

There has also been a sectarian, dogmatic approach that since ours is the vanguard party of the working class, all those who really want socialism will eventually have to come to us. Moreover, we have for some time neglected the deep roots of American socialist traditions, strikingly evidenced in the recent significant Debs Centennial observations where certain influential labor spokesmen participated in a major way.

Be that as it may, an entirely new approach is demanded of us.

This of course does not call for any move to try to form a new party of socialism prematurely. True, socialist currents are growing and will continue to do so, and the activity of diverse Marxist-oriented groups is on the upgrade. Yet the task of organizing a broad, mass party of socialism, based in substance on genuine Marxist principles, cannot be easy nor quick. We American Communists will do our utmost to help create the pre-requisite for such a development.

Considerable headway can surely be made in this direction in the next year or two. But this will be a process. It will necessitate sharp political and ideological struggles, as well as our collective participation with the bulk of all the socialist-minded elements in united front activity in concert with other progressive forces. In the course of this a stronger Marxist core will undoubtedly crystallize among these diverse pro-socialist groupings and currents.

In the interim, and as one of the essential pre-conditions for establishing a broader mass party of socialism, it will surely be necessary to strengthen our Communist Party politically, ideologically, and organizationally—and, above all, to extend its mass influence and United Front relationships.

One of the biggest lessons we American Marxists need to learn if we are to move ahead boldly, rapidly, and successfully, and extend our base and mass influence—is the urgent necessity of put-

ting an end to all dogmatism. As never before, we American Communists have to master the art of applying and developing the universal science of Marxism creatively, on the basis of the experience, circumstances and traditions of our own country.

### **PUT AN END TO DOGMATISM**

In this connection, we have to understand the difference between that which is universally valid in Marxism and that which is peculiarly applicable only to one or another country. This means that we have to learn to distinguish between the principles of Marxism which are valid generally, including the imperative necessity of strengthening the bonds of solidarity between the working people of all countries and the different ways, forms, and methods Marxists elucidate and develop their tactics and concretely apply the principles of scientific socialism in a variety of different situations. Certainly our job is not to study Marxism in the abstract or as a catechism, but to study the problems and developments *in our own country* by means of the living, dialectical method of Marxism.

It is with this precept in mind that we should begin to dig deeper into a host of questions ranging from economic perspectives, the significance of the accelerated growth of state monopoly capitalism in the post-war period, the development of a rounded-out anti-monopoly program, to the national question and to the American road to socialism, as well as various organizational forms and methods of Party work and structure.

We need to develop a method of theoretical-political work where we examine continuously and more concretely the actual facts in each given situation, the exact relationship of class forces, and the specific level of the mass movement and trends, not only nationally, but in each state or city, in each industry or rural area, in each given union, lodge, or chapter of this or that mass organization. Without this, it is not possible to formulate sound policies, to apply or develop correct tactics, to exhibit concrete political and organizational initiative, or to win the support and confidence of wide masses.

In this connection it is incumbent on us to re-appraise our whole position on self-determination in the Black Belt. For instance, a very important section of the Party's Program, adopted in

1954, is that dealing with the oppression of the Negro people and the struggle for equality.

Yet note should be taken of the fact that in the 1954 Program the previous position of the Party on self-determination in the Black Belt has been modified—in fact, dropped. I happen to agree with this, just as I concur with a similar handling of this question in the New Program for the South\* and in Foster's recent article in *Political Affairs*.\*\*

It seems to me, however, that it is necessary to do more than reverse our position by shelving it. I believe we should state frankly to the Party the reasons and developments which prompt us to alter our position on the slogan of self-determination. In my opinion we should frankly acknowledge that while the Negro question in the Deep South remains a national and an agrarian question, for some time developments in the South have *not* moved in the direction of the establishment of a Negro nation.

The basic demands of the Negro people in the South, which they themselves put forward and are struggling for, are for the right to vote and representative government, for full equality in employment, education and in all other spheres of life, and for achieving serious reforms in agriculture.

In re-appraising our position on self-determination in the Black Belt, our Party should emphasize, as never before, that the struggle for Negro rights and freedom, north and south of the Mason-Dixon line, has emerged as a general, national democratic task, upon the solution of which depends the democratic and social advance of the whole nation, particularly of the workers and farmers.

### THE AMERICAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM

The final question I wish to touch on is certain aspects of the American road to socialism.

During the past years, the most convenient frame-up weapon against our Party has been the slander that Communists are "foreign agents" and everywhere stand for the overthrow of all capitalist governments by force and violence. But the thin ice of lies upon which the Smith Act and other such thought-control measures rest their claims is cracking.

\* *The Southern People's Common Program for Democracy, Prosperity and Peace*, issued by the Southern Regional Committee of the CPUSA.

\*\* "Notes on the Struggle for Negro Rights." *Political Affairs*, May, 1955.

That explains some of the startled press comments evoked by Khrushchev's discussion on paths to socialism at the XXth Congress. Marguerite Higgins, of the *New York Herald Tribune*, recently put the problem this way:

. . . "In the United States, for instance, laws for the prosecution of Communist leaders have been based on presentation of evidence in United States courts that Communists advocate the forcible overthrow of the government. But here is Mr. Khrushchev and the entire Soviet Communist Party congress saying that it is no longer so. In some cases communism can be achieved by using existing legal machinery.

"American Communist leaders will undoubtedly insist that they are, and intend to act, peacefully within the law. Now they have Mr. Khrushchev to back them up publicly with a speech that will be a Communist bible. What happens now to our government's case?"

While Miss Higgins looked to a "bible" for the revelations on "forcible overthrow," the truth has been asserted with growing clarity over a considerable period by Communists in various countries, including our own.

Already in 1947-48, our Party took note of the new world situation arising after World War II, and recognized that civil war is not inevitable in all capitalist countries. And in that period, in our answers to the *N.Y. Times*\* and the *N.Y. Herald Tribune*,\*\* Comrade Foster and I categorically stated that our Party advocated a democratic solution of all problems confronting the American people, including the eventual transition to socialism. Subsequently, especially in 1949, Comrade Foster developed our Party's position further and demonstrated how and why we American Communists seek and advocate peaceful and democratic processes in effecting the transition to socialism by the people of our country.\*\*\*

As world experience has shown, and as the XXth Congress analyzed, there are many paths to socialism, and each country will

\* *Is Communism Un-American?* by Eugene Dennis. Answers to nine questions posed by *The New York Times*. New Century, New York. 5 cents.

\*\* *Twenty-Three Questions About the Communist Party*, by William Z. Foster. Published, together with Mr. Foster's answers, in the *New York Herald Tribune*, January 11, 1948. New Century, New York. 10 cents.

\*\*\* *In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders*, by William Z. Foster. New Century, New York. 25 cents.

find its own path depending on its own traditions, the conditions of its struggle for progress, and the desires of the vast majority of its people.

There are also many *forms* of transition to socialism, and these are becoming *more*, not less, diversified—including the possibility of transforming certain parliaments into people's assemblies by constitutional majorities and mass movements.

Whether the realization of this or that path and form of social transformation turns out to be more or less peaceful depends on a host of circumstances. It is dependent on the concrete relationship of class forces, the unity and class consciousness of the working class and its allies, as well as on the strength of big capital at such a point in history, on the extent of its repressive powers, and on its ability under the given conditions to offer the fiercest resistance to social progress.

#### **FOR A PEACEFUL AND DEMOCRATIC ROAD TO SOCIALISM**

As for the USA, we American Communists re-affirm that we do *not* advocate force and violence. We do *not* consider civil war inevitable nor in any way desirable. We desire and seek constitutional and democratic solutions to current and fundamental problems. We favor and advocate a peaceful and democratic transition to socialism.

We Communists and other advanced workers strive for a constitutional and democratic solution to all the problems of today and tomorrow, in full recognition of the fact that U.S. monopoly capital is the strongest in the world and one of the most ruthless in furthering its objectives at home and abroad. The U.S. trusts and their political representatives have used and will continue to try to use demagoguery, division and force and violence to one degree or another to halt all social progress and democratic advance here or anywhere else.

Therefore one main conclusion that the working class and all popular forces must draw is that it is necessary at every juncture to prevent and defeat the stubborn efforts of the economic royalists to thwart the popular will. This is so now, especially in the Deep South, and also in respect to the struggle for progressive labor legislation and the enforcement of the Bill of Rights for Communists and non-Communists alike.

The decisive labor and democratic forces will have to establish the most sweeping unity of action to cope with the ever-fiercer resistance that the corporate interests will resort to in order to avert the curbing and eventual breaking of their powers.

Nonetheless, it is our conviction that the course of world and national trends will increasingly enhance the possibility for peaceful and constitutional advance to socialism. Such a possibility will not arise automatically—it will have to be fought for and won. The crucial question will be the ability of a united working class to exert decisive political influence on all democratic forces to check and defeat the reactionary offensive of monopoly and to keep open and extend all constitutional, democratic processes. This is what we should emphasize and work for today and on the morrow.

In addition to this, we Communists should develop a much more graphic picture of what American socialism would look like, what miracles of achievements it would introduce. Would not a socialist America in a peaceful world, sharing the benefits of atomic and thermonuclear energy, make the most rapid advances in production and living standards in the history of nations? Would not the advance of the USA to socialism mean an end almost overnight to misery and backwardness in every part of our country? Would not a socialist society effect wonders in the spheres of education, culture, sports, and national health? Would not socialism transform the South and convert it into a flourishing and prosperous area in which the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity would hold sway? Under socialism would not Congress and the state legislatures become truly representative of the working people? In a socialist society would not civil rights and civil liberties for all the people—Negro and white—the equality and dignity and creative ability of man, at long last be fully realized and flower?

At all times, we Communists should project the specific American road to socialism without diverting from the central mass economic, electoral and other political tasks of the immediate period ahead, upon the solution of which the way forward depends. We should avoid oversimplifying and presenting the road to socialism as a series of schematic stages. At this juncture we should particularly stress the *next immediate stage* of progress for the people of our country—which is inseparably bound up with, and requires the crys-

tallization of a broad democratic front movement and coalition, under progressive labor influence.

**By presenting the possibility of peaceful and democratic transition to socialism in the USA in such a manner, we American Communists will enhance the prospects for its realization. We will likewise focus attention on the main tasks of the moment and the period ahead, especially the forging of a labor-democratic coalition whose potential for effectively curbing the power of the trusts will grow ever more mighty.**

The central objective in the '56 elections is to help create some of the conditions for the emergence of such an anti-monopoly coalition capable of influencing the next Administration and Congress, and of subsequently bringing into power an administration and congress resting on and responsive to such a popular movement and alliance—*a government committed to peaceful negotiation and reducing international tensions, to promoting the economic security of the working people at the expense of the monopolies, to upholding the Constitution and enforcing the Bill of Rights. The struggle for and the achievement of such a democratic anti-monopoly coalition and subsequently of such a government, will safeguard the welfare, interests and rights of the American people and will pave the way for new democratic and social advances, as well as strengthen the cause of world peace.*

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