

# A STRANGE KIND OF 'BANKRUPTCY'

By ALAN MAX

I HAVE NOT yet seen the editorials in the out-of-town papers on the Draft Resolution recently made public by the National Committee of the Communist Party in preparation for the convention next February.

But I do have before me a sheaf of editorials from the local press. The New York Times is perhaps typical of all of them and, in fact, since its editorial was published first, probably influenced the others.



"Confession of Bankruptcy" is the title of the Times' editorial. It is the leading editorial of that day, (Sept. 24) and as one starts to read it, the Times seems to be vastly enjoying its victory. The Times, in its own fashion, recounts for half a column the self-criticisms, the errors and

mistakes which the Resolution details.

Since the New York Times has been trying to put the Communist Party out of business all these years—just as it tried to prevent unionization of the American workers until it had to surrender—the paper appears to feel just fine over what it calls a "Confession of Bankruptcy."

But hold on!

Suddenly, midway in the editorial, there is a change of mood. The expansive smile disappears and gives way to a frown.

"The main purpose of this document, however," the Times says of the Resolution, "is to lay the political basis for a resurgence of Communist strength and influence in this country. It is this which must arouse our vigilance."

Isn't there something strange about all this? Why should anyone be vigilant over a "bankrupt?" How can there possibly be a "resurgence" by a foe who has been utterly vanquished?

(The Herald Tribune finds it self talking the same way. "The

draft resolution is a record of Communist failure. . . . To that extent it is heartening. At the same time, the Reds are preparing to correct these tactical errors. . . . And against these efforts Americans must be prepared. . . .")

I DO NOT propose to deal in this column with the reasons given by The Times, Herald Tribune, the Mirror, etc., as to why the American people have something to fear from a Communist Party resurgence. There is nothing new in these reasons. Actually they aren't reasons at all in the real meaning of the word, but red-baiting catch-phrases lifted from the reports of the House Un-American Committee.

What interests me here at this moment is the alarm which these papers feel over the current discussion in and around the Communist Party. If these discussions, as some people fear, are giving satisfaction to the conservatives and reactionaries, these conservatives and reac-

tionaries have a strange way of displaying their satisfaction.

It is true of course, that these papers do not want to be robbed of their red-baiting weapons which they have used over the years against everyone that they disagree with, and that their call for "vigilance" is a call to oppose every labor and liberal trend in the country.

But I am certain there is much more to the situation than this. The mistakes of the Communist Party in the past gave joy to the reactionaries. But the analysis of these mistakes alarms them. The errors, setbacks and isolation of the Communists gave the reactionaries genuine satisfaction. But the recognition by the Communists of the extent of these setbacks, of their cause, and of the direction which the correction must follow, seems to fill the reactionaries with foreboding.

EVERY SOCIALIST movement of any importance over the past many decades has made its contribution to the country and

then dwindled into a pathetic sect. What is there about the Communist movement that makes the reactionaries fear that it will not follow the way of its predecessors? It is, I am convinced, the Marxist scientific method of analysis and correction which the Communists possess and which they are determined to use now more wisely than in the past, employing the scientific method of Marxism rather than relying on dogma; re-examining all previous policies and, in the most scientific manner possible, examining the world of today and particularly their own country. The foes of the Communists are accustomed to deride this scientific method, but it is just this which makes them fear that instead of going into "bankruptcy" the Communists, by a tremendous and united effort, will find themselves once again with close ties with the tens of millions of unionists, Negro people and others who in 1956 are marching forward with so much confidence and determination.