

Time for a Change

By John Gates

*"New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth."*

—from *The Present Crisis* by James Russell Lowell

THE PRESENT Party discussion is undoubtedly the most crucial in our history. I believe we are in a profound crisis. This situation did not come about just in the last few months, but is the accumulation of many factors, some of which operated during the entire history of our Party and were brought to a head by recent events.

The protests against those who feel that their lives have been wasted miss the point, in my opinion. Of course we have made vital and lasting contributions to the progress of our country, and this is a legitimate source of pride for all of us. But that is exactly why so many of our members are so deeply disturbed. Why, despite our contribution to making our country and the world a better and safer place to live in, is our Party at such a low point? Just because of our past achievements, we must give frank and honest answers to where we are, how did we get there, and where do we go from here.

The crisis we are in is a deep and many-sided one. We have suffered great losses in membership and even more in influence. We are isolated almost entirely as a Party from the

labor movement, the Negro people, and the farmers. The confidence of many people in us that we built up over many years has been largely dissipated. Even the confidence of our own members in the Party and its leadership has been severely shaken. Those of our members who are in the popular mainstream are doing fine work as progressive trade unionists and Negro militants, but not in most cases as known and organized Communists. We are still compelled to function largely as an illegal or semi-legal organization. Although the country is emerging from the reaction of the past decade, our decline in numbers and influence has still not been halted. The labor and Negro people's movements successfully resisted the reactionary offensive of the cold war years and are advancing with seven-league boots, but we who pioneered in the struggle for labor unity, industrial unionism, and equal rights for the Negro people are largely outside of this advance.

The advance of the American workers to Socialism is impossible without a conscious and organized socialist vanguard. In all candor we

must admit that we are not that today. Nor are we likely to be the exclusive channel through which such a leadership will come into existence, but I do think we are an important and essential part of this process and can make a decisive and distinctive contribution if we face up to our present crisis and make the necessary changes to surmount it.

THE DRAFT RESOLUTION

In my opinion the draft resolution does begin to do this and that is why I voted for it. I do not think it is perfect. It does not profess to have all the answers, and not all of its ideas are necessarily correct. As a member of the National Committee which has made so many serious errors, I feel the need for modesty and humility. Our resolution is the beginning and not the end of wisdom, and it is up to the present discussion to perfect and correct it where necessary. To achieve this, we need to create an atmosphere which welcomes all new ideas no matter how unorthodox they may be, and debates them on their merits without resort to name calling as a substitute for thinking.

American history is replete with radical movements that flourished and made splendid contributions, but which subsequently disappeared or became sterile sects either because they outlived their usefulness or failed to change with changing times

and lost touch with reality. The Socialist Labor Party became such a sect, and the once powerful Socialist Party dwindled to a mere shadow of its former self mainly because of its sectarian opposition to the New Deal, to collective security against fascism, and of its disastrous merger with the Trotskyites.

If we are not to meet with the same fate, it will be because we take a good hard look at ourselves, our country and the world, do not hesitate to analyze our mistakes, admit them, and make the necessary corrections, no matter how painful. I am confident that we will.

THE PARTY'S ERRORS

In my opinion, those comrades who refuse to admit we made basic and fundamental errors do the Party a great disservice. They seek to minimize the mistakes by blaming the objective situation, gloss over them by saying in any case we were no worse than other Parties which made similar mistakes, and ascribe the crisis in the Party not to our mistakes but to our admission of them, as if the concealment of our errors would solve our problems.

Naturally everything in life is based on the objective situation, or reality. But it was just our wrong estimates of the objective situation which led to many of our wrong policies and actions. This was so with respect to our analyses of the war and fascist dangers and our

perennial mistaken economic predictions. Some comrades invoke the objective situation today only in order to explain away our errors, but in the past when many of our members in unions and other organizations brought up the objective situation to prove that our line was unrealistic, we denounced them as Right opportunists for underestimating the militancy of the workers, etc. Today we admit that the average real wages of the workers have been rising, but only yesterday we insisted that the opposite was the case. If we admit that our electoral policy in 1948 was wrong then we must admit too that it resulted from the fact that either we ignored or mistakenly estimated the objective situation. And how can it be claimed that our 1948 electoral policy was wrong but our trade-union policy was correct?

Certainly many left us because of repression. But that does not explain why they are not returning to us now that the atmosphere is improving. Nor does repression explain why we lost prestige and influence. The real issue is how we fought against the repression. Did we pursue policies that would win us friends and influence, or did we facilitate the attacks against us and our isolation? It does no good to run away from our mistakes. Those who talk so much about a Marxist-Leninist party would do well to remember that one of the characteristics of such a party is fearless self-

criticism regardless of the use its opponents may make of it.

No political movement can live on the laurels of the past. Change is a law of political life. Even the Democratic Party has discovered it can no longer win on the memory of the New Deal. In the new situation of today, new problems have arisen which require bold new thinking and solutions. That is only possible if we eliminate the atmosphere which discourages new thought, insists we hold on to everything old as sacred, and brands as revisionist, Browderite, Right-wing and liquidationist all new ideas.

ERA OF GREAT CHANGE

We are living in a time of great change. The labor movement has grown to 18 million. The AFL-CIO merger was a gigantic and historic step which foreshadows new rapid advances and increased political influence for the American working class. It is a sign of the times when such a reactionary as Nixon feels compelled to talk about a four-day week. Labor is already strong enough to win the 30-hour or four-day week without reduction in pay when the situation makes it necessary. The only thing holding it back is the relatively full employment in most industries. With increasing productivity, reduction in working hours is inevitable. Labor is determined that never again will it permit the burden of future depressions to

be placed on its shoulders as in the thirties.

Some comrades say that all we have to do is to sit tight until the next depression and the return of the "good old days" of the thirties. This is a false and pernicious theory which has done us great damage and resulted in the world passing us by. The workers do not consider the days when they starved as the "good old days." They are not inclined to accept the return of such bad times as inevitable, and will follow the leadership of those with a program to prevent it, or to guarantee that they will not be its helpless victims if and when a depression does come. It is not true that Socialism can come about only through war and economic catastrophe. It will come through the constantly successful struggle for peace, prosperity and democracy. Furthermore, today is not 1929. Then the basic industrial workers were unorganized, the Negro people lacked organization and leadership, and we had a virtual monopoly in filling the vacuum. Now the situation is totally changed. This is one of the big unsolved problems that faces us, the relationship between us and the people under conditions where they now possess powerful unions and other organizations which are giving them leadership.

UNITY AGAINST MONOPOLY

The draft resolution states that the great overriding historic need

of the American people is to unite against the monopolies. The struggle to achieve a popular alliance that will weaken the grip of Big Business on the nation is the path through which the American people, led by labor, will eventually establish Socialism. This is the specific American road to Socialism. If we understand this simple but profound fact we will know who is the main enemy, against whom to direct the main fire, and where the leading force and its allies are to be found. Gil Green's book, *The Enemy Forgotten*, performs a great service in this regard, and is a most important contribution to our discussion. I believe it to be the most important and valuable book written by an American Communist so far.

It is true, as Gil Green writes that the main enemy, monopoly, was largely forgotten by the leaders of labor, the Negro people, and the liberals; but it is also true that while we Communists did not forget the enemy, we did not fight correctly against it. We failed to subordinate all our efforts to the struggle for unity against monopoly. We allowed ideological differences between us and the labor, Negro and liberal leaders to stand in the way of a single-minded struggle for popular unity against the economic royalists. Ideological debate and criticism within the potential anti-monopoly alliance is essential at all times, but within the framework of the struggle for unity. Instead we made ideol

logical attack against our potential allies the main thing and weakened our fight for unity. This is the reason why we did not fight correctly against the CIO split, why we took a too negative and critical approach to the labor merger, and became isolated from the main struggles of the Negro people.

The struggle against monopoly is closely linked with the democratic transformation of the South. The continuation of the oppression of the Negro people in new forms after the abolition of chattel slavery is today the main obstacle to democratic and popular progress. This was true in the Civil War era too, but then it was chiefly a barrier to the rising capitalist class of the North to which the still young and undeveloped working class had to subordinate itself. Now the oppression of the Negro people is a big source of profits and political power for the monopolies, but constitutes the main roadblock in the path of American labor and the nation.

Organized labor and other sections of the population are coming to understand more and more that their immediate interests are tied up with the struggle for democracy in the South. Labor's next big advance depends on the unionization of the South which will both help and be helped by the achievement of democracy there. The passage of new social legislation in Congress such as school, housing and hospital construction, flood control, old age bene-

fits, etc., is blocked by the GOP-Dixiecrat alliance. The democratization of the South, at the heart of which lies Negro inequality and oppression, will not eliminate but greatly undermine and weaken the power of the trusts. It will reduce their profits and destroy the political power of their principal ally, the Dixiecrats, and make possible the election of a more progressive Congress. It will give a big new impetus to the building of the anti-monopoly alliance, and open the road for a new socialist advance. The anti-monopoly coalition is itself being built in this struggle. It exists in embryo in the host of powerful organizations that support the NAACP, in which organized labor plays an outstanding role.

The uncompleted democratic revolution in the South is intertwined with the progress of the nation as a whole. That is why the draft resolution calls it the nation's number one democratic task. This historic struggle is another basic and fundamental feature of the specific American road to Socialism.

A NEW WORLD SITUATION

We are living in a new world situation which began with the victory over fascism in 1945. Its main characteristic is the new relationship of forces resulting from the birth of a whole number of socialist states, the newly won independence of formerly colonial states, and the corresponding weakening of world capitalism. This profoundly new situation creates a

whole new set of problems requiring new theories and solutions.

The struggle for peaceful coexistence which began in 1917 with the Russian revolution now takes on a new aspect. Before 1914 war could be prevented only by socialist revolution. World War I could not be forestalled because the forces of revolution were not yet strong enough, but the war itself engendered revolution and was finally brought to an end by the Russian and German revolutions. World War II could have been prevented short of revolution by anti-fascist unity and collective security, but the Soviet Union and the working class and popular movements in the capitalist democracies did not prove strong or united enough to compel it. The war itself created the anti-fascist unity which brought it to a victorious end.

Now the existence of a bloc of socialist countries which is beginning to equal and will in the course of the next decades surpass the capitalist world in material strength, the growing power of the neutralist bloc, and the phenomenal growth of the labor and socialist movements in the capitalist countries, have brought about a power equilibrium which makes possible and practical the prevention of a new world war for the first time in history. This great new fact was put to the test and proved valid in the cold-war decade. The forces of war did not prove strong enough and were defeated. The cold war is slowly but

steadily diminishing, and we have already entered into a new era of peaceful co-existence which will probably be of long duration.

This new era is not a static one. It is marked at present by the continuation of the arms race which has led to a temporary stalemate, an uneasy truce, and an unstable peace. However, the emphasis in this new era is already beginning to shift away from arms to economic and political competition. The essence of the struggle for peaceful co-existence today therefore is to transform the present unstable peace into a lasting one, and there exists every prospect for the successful attainment of this aim.

This new era, the first stage of which we are already in, will have profound repercussions on our domestic scene. The new power and influence of the socialist and neutralist blocs and of the labor and socialist movements everywhere have already greatly aided the struggle of the Negro people and they will facilitate the fight of labor in America for a better life as well. They create the conditions for peace which is the most favorable climate for popular progress, and for the struggle to transform our present warfare economy into a welfare one. As the standard of living in the socialist countries continues to rise and begins to equal and surpass the capitalist countries, it will help the workers everywhere make new advances. None of this of course will come about automati-

cally or out of the goodness of the heart of capitalism. Nothing will or can be achieved without struggle against Big Business. But it is essential for the class struggle that we understand the direction of events and that favorable conditions exist for success.

In my opinion this new era requires sweeping changes in our Party if we are to keep pace with rapidly changing events. I believe it requires that we build a Party of a new type. The concept of the Party under which we have been working was originally geared to a revolutionary situation, or the expectation of the rapid development of one. Regardless of one's opinions as to whether such a concept was ever valid for our conditions, certainly it is not valid for today.

We have entered into a protracted period of peaceful competition during which the struggle in our country will be of an evolutionary character, and lead to an eventual revolutionary transformation. The path towards the triumph of Socialism here is one of peaceful and constitutional struggle. We need a party geared to that kind of situation and struggle. We need a fully democratic party, a party that is legal and is solidly based on American reality and will be recognized and accepted by American workers as their own. Obviously we have been prevented from becoming a democratic and legal working class party by the repression of the government

and employers, and our struggle for legality cannot be divorced from the general struggle for democratic rights. Nevertheless I think that a substantial part of our present status is self imposed and in our power to change.

Comrade Foster writes in his article that "we must Americanize our Party" (*Political Affairs*, Oct. 1956). Stop and consider a while what that means. It is really a profoundly revealing statement. Comrade Foster complains that the draft resolution is too sweeping in its self-criticism, but in this statement he has made the most damning indictment of our Party that could possibly be made. Why back in the eighteenthies, Engels used to entreat the German Marxists who had migrated to America to Americanize themselves, to learn the language and customs, become part of the mainstream of the labor movement, and to apply Marxism to America creatively and not dogmatically. But for us now, after 38 years of existence as an American party, made up of Americans, most of whom were born here and have no problem of language or customs, to have to admit that we must still Americanize ourselves, reveals our situation better than anything I could possibly say. Certainly we cannot blame our failure to be American enough on reaction. Comrade Foster has hit upon, involuntarily perhaps, what I believe to be the heart of our problem. This tragic situation cannot be cured by a few

patches here and there as we have been doing for many years. It can only be solved by drastic and basic changes which I think the draft resolution begins to do.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

The first change that is necessary is our approach to Marxist-Leninist theory. I voted with the majority of the National Committee to recommend to the convention that we delete the phrase "Marxism-Leninism" from the preamble to our Party constitution. I think this is necessary because the government has successfully made use of this phrase to distort what we American Communists really believe and stand for, to isolate us from the American people, and to virtually illegalize us. Instead of tying ourselves to a phrase which can so easily be distorted and misused against us, we need to spell out in our own language the theories we base ourselves on and our true program and policy. Does this mean throwing out and abandoning all the work of Marx, Engels and Lenin? Of course not. But if anyone asks me whether I base myself on the principles of Marx and Lenin, I want to be able to answer which of those principles I believe in and which I do not. Theory is the generalization of experience, and since experience is always changing, theory must change with it.

Science is a living and not a dead thing. Science that fails to develop

loses touch with reality and ceases to become a correct guide to action. The development of science requires the constant examination of ever-changing reality, and the testing of old concepts to see if they remain valid, need to be discarded or modified, or new concepts added. We who claim to be scientific socialists and are so critical of all other bodies of thought must have a critical approach to our own science and constantly review everything afresh.

To put it charitably, we have not always had such an attitude but sometimes tended to regard the Marxist classics as sacred scripture providing all answers for all problems for all time. In fact, the rigid, mechanical and insistent use of the term "Marxism-Leninism" can help to create the unscientific concept of the cult of the individual. We now realize how harmful it was to deify Stalin and consider him the fountainhead of all wisdom. It is just as wrong to attribute such qualities to Marx and Lenin even though they were better men than Stalin. All men, no matter how great their genius, are human beings and have historical limitations. Marx and Lenin were unquestioned geniuses. They founded and developed scientific socialism brilliantly, and it is correct in that sense to identify the science with their names, but it is also necessary to see that science must develop and inevitably go much further than its original founders, that any true science is always larger

and broader, deeper and more profound than any individuals. To limit science to the discoveries of any particular individuals will automatically restrict its development and transform it into a lifeless dogma.

This was the approach of Marx and Lenin themselves. They were merciless opponents of all fixed and closed systems of thought, always insisted upon "studying all history afresh," and the necessity for the "concrete study of concrete reality" above everything else. Marx himself once cried out that "I am not a Marxist" in protest against those of his followers who slavishly and parrot-like repeated his doctrines as fixed formulas to solve all problems.

The idea that the doctrines of Marx and Lenin are unchangeable creates an atmosphere that suppresses the thought and debate which are essential for the development of science and correct policies. Those who object to the phrase in the resolution that we base ourselves on Marxist-Leninist principles "as we interpret them" make a serious mistake on two grounds in my opinion. First, if *we* do not interpret them in the light of present reality and our own understanding, they interpret themselves and become dogma, and second, if *we* do not interpret them it means we become dependent on the interpretation of others.

The issue consequently is not the abandonment of Marxist-Leninist theory, but the need for a critical re-evaluation and further develop-

ment of it. The issue is to determine what remains valid, such as the materialist conception of history, surplus value, the class struggle, the leading role of the working class in the struggle for Socialism, imperialism as capitalism in its monopoly, dying stage, the national and colonial question, for example, and what is no longer valid, such as the law of inevitable violent proletarian revolution, the inevitability of war, or needs to be modified, like the theory of the state, etc. This is a life and death necessity for us and we can accomplish it only by ceasing to regard Marxism-Leninism as something sacred, holy and inviolate.

ON THE USSR

The second change necessary concerns our approach to the Soviet Union. The historic role of the USSR in blazing the trail for Socialism, and in transforming the world situation to where lasting peace is now possible, has fully justified the high regard we have always had for the Soviet Union and its Communist Party. Humanity will be forever indebted to the Soviet Union for those services. We played our own modest part in bringing this about, and our defense of the Soviet Union against the efforts of world capitalism to destroy it by force has proved to be in the best patriotic interests of our country.

However, this correct and patriotic principle of international workers'

solidarity was seriously distorted by the development of unequal and one-sided relationships between the CPSU and other Communist Parties, especially during the period of Stalin's leadership. The great authority and prestige of the USSR as the pioneer socialist state turned into a concept of Soviet infallibility. This, and the idea that the Soviet Union was the only possible model for other countries, led both to an uncritical acceptance of Soviet mistakes, and to the wrong application in other countries of policies which may have been valid for the USSR but not necessarily for them.

The 20th Congress of the CPSU was a major and decisive contribution to opening the eyes of all Communists to the true state of affairs, and has helped to free us from the incorrect relationships between parties and the harmful ideas and practices within parties that had developed over many decades. International socialist solidarity has been put on a more sound and solid basis, and the cause of Socialism in general and within each country has greatly benefited.

The revelations of Stalin's mistakes and crimes, though shocking and brutal, and the process of correction by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since Stalin's death, have had a liberating effect on world Communism, in my opinion, and were absolutely essential for the further progress of Socialism not only in the USSR but everywhere.

They have laid the foundations for a new leap forward in healing the historic breach between Socialist and Communist Parties, the achievement of working-class unity in general, and important new successes in the fight for peace. They are making possible big new strides in socialist democracy, justice and morality which were seriously compromised under Stalin's leadership. They are helping each country to find and to travel its own national path to Socialism.

All this is a gigantic process which is not proceeding evenly and smoothly, but it is inexorable. There is no turning back from it. It will be facilitated and speeded to the extent that we learn the fullest lessons from the Stalin mistakes. The discussion precipitated by the 20th Congress in world Communist ranks was healthy and constructive. In my opinion it must be continued and developed further in order to extract the maximum benefits. The questions of many Communists concerning the adequacy of the explanations for Stalin's misleadership are fully justified. History is not made primarily by heroes or gods, nor by villains or devils. The violations of democracy and justice in the USSR cannot be explained by the deficiencies of Stalin alone. How could one man have achieved the power he did and why was a whole country powerless before him? How could such flagrant violations of socialist ideals take place for such a

long time in a socialist country? I think the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU gave some of the explanations but by no means fully satisfactory ones. I consider its rebuke to Togliatti to be a disservice because more than any other Communist he was trying to get at the roots of the matter. It is a mistake to try to end the discussion. I welcome the corrective steps being taken by the Soviet Union, and especially the bold progress being made by the Polish, Chinese, Italian and other Communists.

SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

The great lesson we must learn is that the expansion of democracy is not automatic under Socialism but must be fought for. Socialism creates the material conditions for the fullest expansion of democracy, much higher than in the most advanced capitalist democracies, but it must be built just as socialist economy must be. Violations of democracy are not inherent in Socialism but on the contrary come into conflict with it and must be eliminated as is now taking place, but we also know now that neither is it inherent in Socialism that democracy cannot be suppressed, restricted and violated. Better controls by the people over their leaders and institutions must be devised than up until now in order to make impossible any future violations of democracy.

We Americans must guarantee

that American Socialism will be a fully democratic Socialism. I am confident we will be able to achieve that, partly as a result of the pioneering efforts and enormous sacrifices of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, partly because we will be on guard against repeating the mistakes of the Soviet Union if we master all the lessons of it, and especially because of our own more favorable circumstances and historical traditions.

FOR A CHANGED PARTY

The third change we must make is to build a different kind of a party. To make our most effective contribution to the achievement of the broadest type of American socialist democracy superior in every respect to our present democracy, requires the most democratic kind of Communist Party. The present concept of our Party may have been necessary for a period in which war was inevitable and peaceful constitutional transition impossible but this is no longer the case.

We are in a new era which requires new programs and forms of organization. In my view this requires that we take a new look at the concept of democratic centralism. Our experience has been the tendency for this to become transformed into maximum centralization and minimum democracy. Whether this is inherent in the concept or not I do not know but it very well may be. The essential thing at this time

is to make our Party fully democratic from top to bottom. I think it is necessary to separate democracy from centralism, else the former becomes subordinate to the latter. This is not to deny the need for centralism but it must be made subordinate to democracy. Democratic centralism apparently results in a semi-military type of organization which is clearly not valid for our country in this period.

Certainly we must have majority rule, as virtually every American organization has, but not the over-centralized form we now have. It is argued that super-centralization is essential in order to be effective but this is belied by the experience of other American organizations, many of which are quite effective without it. Naturally our organization must be based on a single ideology and the policies decided upon by the majority must be carried out by the organization. Organized factions and more than one center in the organization should not be permitted. But it is necessary to guarantee the right of dissent after policy has been adopted and while it is being carried out. Indeed, dissent must be protected at all times and not just in periods of pre-convention discussion. Democratic centralism has never permitted this. We need unity and discipline but this should flow from conviction as the result of vigorous democratic debate at all times, and not from compulsion as it has tended to do in the past.

In my opinion the name of the Party ought to be changed. I have no illusions that such a change will automatically and miraculously solve all of our problems, but if we make the serious changes described above, it will dramatize to the American people that our Party is making profound and genuine changes, and under such circumstances help us in the fight for legality, not only in the courts but more important in our relations with the American people.

I think too that we must give the most serious consideration to whether we should retain the party form of organization. Our resolution correctly states that this is not a matter of principle. Political principles are primary and forms of organization are subordinate to and flow from them. Form and structure of organization can vary greatly and must be determined by what can most effectively carry forward our political objectives under given circumstances. We are not a political party as the American people understand it. Political parties in America are electoral organizations primarily. We must admit we are not that today if we are honest with ourselves.

AGAINST DISSOLUTION

I think we have an important role to play in our country as an organized political force and have a special, vital and essential contribution to make. This is because of our scientific socialist ideology, our vast ex-

perience both good and bad, and the thousands of able fighters for the interests of the people and Socialism we have educated. That is why I am opposed to dissolution. To disperse and disband the organized political force we represent would be a crime and a tragedy, and would set back the cause of Socialism in our country for a long time. There is no other political force in America that can provide the leadership we are capable of giving.

I regret exceedingly that men like Joseph Starobin have seen fit to sever relations with us. He represents those who feel we are finished, hopelessly compromised and in capable of making a serious change. I think he and others are profoundly mistaken, and that time will prove this. To leave the organization will not help to change it, and the same is true of many who are remaining in the organization but are standing on the sidelines waiting to see what will happen. While I think that Starobin and others like him have taken a wrong step, we must recognize that it represents a vote of non-confidence in us and constitutes a most serious challenge. We must prove by our deeds that they were mistaken. I am confident this will happen. Meanwhile, I do not think that Starobin and those like him are lost to the cause of Socialism, but will continue to contribute to it in their own way and I believe that in the end we will be re-united.

The political force that we are

must be maintained, strengthened and built. I think we can do this most effectively if we change our party form to one of a political action association. I do not favor our becoming a socialist educational society which conducts abstract education for Socialism isolated from the struggles of the workers and their allies. Whatever form we finally decide upon, we must be a socialist working class organization which bases itself on scientific Socialism, participates in and strives to give leadership, in the new ways required by the present situation, to the immediate struggles of the people, and to educate for Socialism on the basis of those struggles.

I am not for making such a change abruptly, and I doubt whether the question will be sufficiently clarified by the time of our February convention, but I do think we need the most serious debate in our Party on the matter. I hope it will not become an emotional debate with charges of Browderism, etc. I think our big mistake under Browder was not the formation of the Communist Political Association but the wrong content we put into it, namely the mistaken concepts of progressive capitalism and postwar national unity. The formation of a political action association with a correct program will, in my opinion, be a great forward step, more in line with the modest role we actually play in the country, facilitate the improvement of our relations with the labor move-

ment and other people's organizations, help to legalize our status, and enable us to play a more influential role in the affairs of our nation.

SIGNS OF SOCIALIST REVIVAL

I think too it will help us make a greater contribution to the eventual achievement of a new united party of Socialism. This idea is one of the most important in the resolution. I believe it is rooted in American reality. There are definite signs of socialist revival in the country, although far from being a mass upsurge as yet. Nor is it true that these socialist stirrings are only among isolated and sectarian intellectual groupings and publications. In the first place they exist in the labor movement. The hundreds of thousands of workers who passed through our ranks, the millions who once voted socialist, are still in the unions, and new workers are beginning to come to Socialism. They will not and cannot come to us at present, and ways must be found, parallel with our efforts to strengthen our own organization, to help bring into being new forms of organization, independent of us, which can provide expression for the grow-

ing body of socialist-minded people in the first place, workers.

I do not agree with those who say the slogan of a new united party of Socialism should be de-emphasized and put on the shelf. In actuality this would mean to discard it and not to work seriously for it. Of course it will not come about overnight, but we must be foremost in working for socialist unity, especially since we have a distinctive contribution to make to it as American Marxists.

The test as to whether we shall succeed in becoming a truly independent American working-class organization dedicated to the immediate struggles of the American people and Socialism lies right now in the kind of atmosphere we develop in the discussion, and ultimately of course in the policies we adopt. If we develop an atmosphere of respect for and consideration of each other's views on their merits, do not stifle the discussion, avoid name calling and emotionalism, learn how to live together in the same Party despite differing and opposing views, and increase our mass work as we discuss, I think we will make significant headway. I am confident that such will be the case, and that our Party will emerge strengthened and in a better position to go forward.