

THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY*

By JOHN WILLIAMSON

THE AIM OF THE Constitution Committee has been to make all the necessary changes to bring the Constitution into accord with the principles of a Marxist political party of the working class.

Because of the limited time to prepare this special convention and the need for the convention to center its attention on the correction of our revisionist errors as well as the reorganization of our leadership, it has not been possible to involve the membership in a real discussion on amending the Constitution.

Similar considerations at this convention make it impossible to present a separate report on the functioning of the organization and the organizational-educational work and tasks confronting the Party. In the course of this report, I will comment briefly on that phase of our work, leaving the discussion of these remarks together with my sub-report to the last National Committee meet-

ing, to the special panel which will hear and discuss a report on further aspects of the proper functioning of our organization.

I would like to make one further remark of an introductory nature. In the preparation for the work of this Convention, the National Board established a preliminary but representative Preamble and Constitution Committee which has devoted considerable effort to revising the Constitution. Your Convention Committee was greatly assisted by this preliminary work and made many additional changes and improvements.

The proposed recommendations for changes in the Constitution are as follows: First, we propose to add 20 new Sections that deal explicitly with many questions we consider necessary to insure the proper functioning of our Party and especially to guarantee the full participation of the membership in the work of the Party, clearly defining the rights and duties of the members. Secondly, we propose the deletion of three old sections which in our opinion are not in accord with the effective functioning of our organization. Thirdly, we have made additions to five existing sections. And, finally, we have strengthened eight and reformulated three of the existing sections. Each of these, you will note as we go along.

In presenting this report, I will follow the procedure of making extended remarks explaining related Articles, and the Convention will

then discuss and act on the Sections of these Articles, seriatim.

NAME AND PURPOSES

The first two Articles dealing with the Name and Purposes are obviously of prime importance. Our Constitution must reflect in the proposed name and purposes the distinguishing character of our organization—namely, that it is the Marxist political party of the working class. As you will note, we definitely propose changing the name of the organization to *Communist Party*. We recognize that the change of name from *Communist Party* to *Communist Political Association* in May 1944 was basically incorrect. We say this, not because a Marxist political party of the working class must at all times have the name "Party." In the circumstances of May, 1944, however, the change of name was fundamentally unsound and incorrect, because it had its origin and motivation in our revisionist policies. Here, for instance, is what Earl Browder gave as the reasons for dissolution:

The Communists foresee that the practical political aims they hold will for a long time be in agreement on all essential points with the aims of a much larger body of non-Communists, and that therefore our political actions will be merged in such larger movements. The existence of a separate political party of Communists, therefore, no longer serves a practical purpose but can be, on the contrary, an obstacle to the

larger unity. (*Teheran: Our Path in War and Peace*, p. 117.)

This meant destroying the whole concept of the indispensability of the Communist Party as an independent political force. This meant the liquidation of the political and organizational role of the Communists. Precisely because the dissolution of the C.P. symbolized our revisionist errors, we definitely propose returning to the name *Communist Party*. It is our firm conviction that:

1. The question of re-establishing the name and form of Communist Party is a question of principle connected with the proper role and functioning of the Party. The necessary political and organizational corrections that we must accomplish will definitely be aided by resuming the name *Communist Party*;

2. It is necessary to resume the name *Communist Party* to restore the correct Marxist concept and role of a vanguard party of the working class; and, furthermore,,

3. It is necessary to complete in all its aspects, including the name, the job we are doing at this Convention, thus leaving no room for further speculation and any "unfinished business."

As to the purposes of our Communist Party. These are outlined with precision in the completely rewritten Preamble, which will be presented later since it is still in the hands of a sub-committee. Let me merely re-

* Report to the Special Convention of the Communist Political Association, held in New York, July 26-28, 1945, which reconstituted the Communist Party of the United States of America.

iterate certain prerequisites of a Marxist Party.

1. The Party must constitute itself and function as the vanguard of the working class. Some people think that we can fulfill our vanguard role today by merely reflecting and putting into more precise and correct form what the democratic masses are thinking. Obviously, this is not correct. This does not mean giving leadership to the mass movement, for it can only result in tailing behind the mass movement. While we must constantly feel the pulse of the people, and remain an integral part of the mass movement, we can never forget that the Party, as one of the Marxist classics emphasizes, "cannot be a real party if it limits itself to registering what the masses of the working people think or experience. . . ." In fulfilling the vanguard role of the Party, we must be able to project ideas often not yet fully accepted or understood by the masses, and do so in such a convincing and effective manner, that we can influence labor and the people to accept them as their own. We must constantly strive to develop the political understanding and consciousness of the working class. We must at all times maintain an independent position aimed at influencing in the first place the most decisive force within the nation, the working class, while vigilantly criticizing and overcoming hesitations and vacillations within the camp of our allies. In my sub-report to the

National Committee meeting, I outlined a series of independent activities of the Communist Party in the field of public relations, electoral activities and mass campaigns which explain in a practical immediate way how we are to function.

The correct emphasis we place on the independent role of our Party is not to be interpreted to mean the weakening of our ties with the masses or their organizations. Nor, should it be distorted to mean the breaking of alliances and close working relationships with other democratic forces. It should not be interpreted to mean replacing leadership of broad masses with the self-satisfied leadership of a small but advanced group of workers. Fulfilling the independent role of the Party means to strengthen our ties with the masses; for it must be clearly realized that without our contributions and activity, the masses would be left to the influence of all the currents and counter-currents of non-Marxist forces and ideologies. Developing the independent activities of the Communist Party means activating larger numbers of Communists, involving them more fully in the mass movement and setting in motion ever greater numbers of non-Communists.

In its broader and more fundamental aspects, the essence of the whole concept of a vanguard working class organization is that we become more and more the Party of the working class, in fact as well

as in program, helping to free the working class of all bourgeois influences and ideologies, strengthening its unity, organization and class consciousness.

In the past, people always had respect for us as a pioneering organization—a trail blazer—an organization which always raised and defended the needs of the working class while cementing ever closer ties with the whole mass movement. People had respect for us as an organization of action, an organization that got things done. While individual non-Communist leaders might like us to limit our activity to that of political advisers, the masses of the people, and first of all the workers, see in the Communist Party an organization of struggle. That concept must be fully re-established again in the months to come.

2. The second prerequisite for a Communist Party is the mastery of Marxist-Leninist theory. This may appear a truism, yet it was in the name of Marxism that we entered the road of revisionism. During these last eighteen months particularly we fell victim to a superficial understanding of Marxism. We repeated that "Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action," and that "Marxism needs enriching and developing," but we forgot that to master Marxist-Leninist theory means above all to assimilate its *substance*. We neglected the substance—and clung to the appearance of the letter. Without the rudder of substance we

swam into the revisionism that we discussed and officially acted upon yesterday. In emphasizing that we adhere to the principles of Marxism we should never forget that this means:

a. That we must fight untiringly for the everyday interests of the workers and all other oppressed sections of the population; that we must give consistent leadership to the national struggles of the Negro people and the struggle for the liberation of the victims of U. S. imperialism;

b. That the working class, upon which the Communist Party bases itself, is the bulwark and most consistent champion of democracy, the nation and social progress, and that therefore the organization, unity and independent role of the working class is in the interest of our nation;

c. That while carrying forward all the democratic traditions of our country and the fighting traditions of the working class of all nations, we always keep before the masses the aim of Socialism as the historic solution of the contradiction between the social character of production and the private ownership of economy by a small group of monopolists.

The effort to understand and master Marxism is not just a task for the leadership—but a necessary task of the entire membership. We must achieve the understanding that the higher the political level and the Marxist-Leninist knowledge of our members and cadres, irrespective of

whether they be Party functionaries or active in trade unions, the more effective will be the result of their work and leadership. Let us never forget the emphasis of Lenin that "the role of the vanguard can be fulfilled only by a Party that is guided by an advanced theory."

However, this is not the first time we have said this, and merely to repeat it, even under the circumstances of today, does not in itself give us the guarantee that our organization will meet this test. To fulfill this objective will require that we break with the historic underestimation of the real significance of Marxist theory within our ranks so crassly demonstrated in the recent past. It will mean, furthermore, that practical measures must be adopted of aiding our membership and leadership in their day-to-day activities to equip themselves with the science of Marxism-Leninism.

I would like to re-emphasize some of the tasks outlined in my report to the National Committee, especially:

a. The need to outline a still more comprehensive program of various types of schools than originally scheduled for this summer, covering C.P. functionaries, trade union activists, national group leaders and Communist youth. However, it must be understood that the quantitative carrying through of such a program does not by itself meet the essential problem we face. To achieve that absolutely necessary Marxist under-

standing, it is essential that we create a new atmosphere and proceed from the individual to the organized forms of study and schooling.

b. That there be established a fully-equipped educational department in the national office and in the larger districts.

c. That we overhaul and strengthen the editorial staffs of all our papers.

d. That we shall organize the most thorough and sustained political struggle against all manifestations of Trotskyism and Social-Democratism in the labor movement.

3. The third prerequisite is that the Communist Party must understand that the *determining factor* in all our organizational and educational work is to help influence and lead the workers and the people in struggle. Organizational work is not some inner activity, but is directed essentially toward the strengthening of our ability to influence and lead the masses in their activities and struggles. Educational work is not mere study groups, established for the sake of study, but is aimed at equipping our members with the knowledge and experience to know how, in the course of all struggles, to adopt the most effective strategy and tactics, helping the workers themselves to arrive at a correct understanding of the questions involved. Agitational work is the ability to speak, to write, to formulate demands that will rally masses in struggle. Training of cadres is to

make available to the working class the most experienced, tested, trained and loyal leaders, so as to have the greatest possible assurance of victory over the enemies of the workers and the people.

4. The fourth prerequisite for a Communist Party is to have firm roots in the working class and to guarantee that industrial workers comprise the majority of its members. Successful leadership and ability to influence the course of our nation require above all that we maintain and greatly extend our ties with the working class, especially in the basic industries. I understand that some people have posed the question somewhat in this manner: under Browder's leadership we became a political force and influenced the life of our nation, but under Foster's leadership we will merely be a sounding board for the working-class sentiments. Obviously this is wrong. Under Browder's leadership, as a result of our liquidationist practices, we became less an influence in the nation than before, precisely because we weakened our connections with the most important force within our nation—the working class. In actuality, we were influenced by other class forces in the nation. To influence successfully the political life of the nation, the center of gravity of the Communist organization should be in the main cities and especially in the centers of large industry. This means our strongest roots must be among the

industrial workers—particularly in the steel, auto, coal, marine, electrical equipment, shipbuilding, and metal industries. This is not so today. Being slow in recognizing changes in the situation and failing to quickly adjust our slogans and tactical line to new problems and conditions, we many times, even if only temporarily, forfeited leadership to the Reuthers and other radical phrase-mongers. However, the Party has great reserves among the workers of basic industry, and if we work correctly we can win their confidence and re-establish our leadership.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to act favorably upon Articles I and II of our Constitution. It is precisely by this action *now* that we will be acting upon the expressed will of our membership to change the name of the present organization, the *Communist Political Association* to the correct name, the *Communist Party of the United States of America*. I formally move the adoption of these two Articles as amended in the Draft Constitution that is in your hands.

MEMBERS' RIGHTS AND DUTIES

I propose now to comment on the next two Articles, III and IV. These deal with Membership and the Rights and Duties of Members of the Communist Party. We cannot be satisfied with the correction of our program and policies alone. An

understanding of our errors also must reflect itself in a development of Communist consciousness expressed in greater activity, better attendance and larger participation at club meetings, with the membership everywhere helping to hammer out policy and fulfilling our new responsibilities.

Acceptance of program and policies is only the expression of the will to become a Communist. The first condition for carrying out the program is participation of all the members in the daily work of the Party. While recognizing that there can be no equality of service and activity, *the Communist Party must strive to have within its ranks only really active members.* Every member must find his or her place, however small the contribution, in the overall picture of activity. This of course should not be distorted to mean withdrawing members active in mass organizations for community mass work, important as that may be, or, far less, for some inner club activity. As far as is practical there should be a merging of such activities. Members active in mass organizations must attend their club meetings. Leadership of Party clubs shall be considered of equal importance with leadership in community mass organizations.

While all conditions of membership are equally important, we emphasize at this convention "activity" and the new clause "attendance at club meetings," because in the past

we incorrectly encouraged the idea of two categories of members—active and supporting members. This was both an expression of liquidationism, a distortion of the high and singular role of Communist leadership, as well as a distortion of democratic centralism.

Attendance at club meetings for *all* members, and not just 30 per cent as in the past, is indispensable if we are to have an active membership under organized political direction. This also requires that we correct the exclusive emphasis placed on the purely educational activity of the clubs. By developing independent Communist activities side by side with our participation in the broader mass movements of the communities or cities, we will demonstrate that the Communist Party has distinctive qualities which differentiate us from all other organizations with whom we cooperate in fulfilling one or another immediate perspective. We will make clear by what the club says, by what the club does, exactly how the Communist Party differs from other progressive organizations.

It is necessary to comment briefly on other conditions of membership. Take the question of reading our press. If all our members would read the *Daily Worker* each day, we would without exaggeration increase the political effectiveness of the Party in the mass movement several-fold. On the question of dues payments—instead of a 60 per cent dues payment, as we have had

in the C.P.A., reflecting both looseness as well as dissatisfaction with our policies, we must again aim for a 100 per cent dues payment and reach at least an over-all average of over 90 per cent.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

I call your attention to two new Sections—4 and 5. The first re-states, in accord with the principles of democratic centralism, the right of unrestricted discussion in the pre-convention period. Section 5 meets a need that we thought should be emphasized, that of involving the membership in the formulation of major policies between conventions, when we do not have the same unrestricted right of reviewing and discussing all our policies and work as in the 60 days prior to conventions.

This does not mean that our present discussion shall, as Comrade Earl Browder implied last evening, continue after the authoritative action of this convention. Our Constitution in later articles correctly re-states a traditional Communist concept that the highest authority of the Party is the national convention and that its decisions are binding on every member. Browder's conception that after the participation of our membership in the most thorough-going discussion in our Party's history and after the deliberations of this Convention, that all this has little significance and that the decision will not be rendered here, is, firstly, a reflection on the capacity of

our membership and of ourselves as delegates, and, secondly, a crass example of Browder's American exceptionalism—an exceptionalism in the face of the well-established organizational principles of the Communist movement everywhere.

Finally, as regards these two Articles. You will see we have a number of new Sections. Some of these are to clarify more specifically certain obligations of Communist membership, but most of them are an effort to emphasize especially the rights of Party members. As we take up each one separately, the committee will make specific comments.

I therefore want to move the adoption of these two Articles, with the understanding that we take up each Section seriatim.

ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS

I propose that we postpone the discussion of Article V until the Convention acts on the question of dues payments. I will now comment on Articles VI, VII, and the new Article VIII.

The structure and functioning of the Communist Party must be considered in connection with the concept of membership which we have already established. The structure must provide the means by which to assure the most effective mobilization of the membership, guarantee adequate opportunity for full membership participation in formulating and hammering out the policies of the organization, develop the ne-

cessary membership responsibility for carrying through decisions and tasks, create the conditions for mastering the principles and the program of the organization, and thus enable the Party to fulfill its role as a vanguard organization.

In recognizing how the revisionist policies we pursued also expressed themselves in the character and functioning of the organization, we must now quickly overcome all Social-Democratic practices and methods that developed during this period and hindered the Communist organization from fulfilling its vanguard role. Our mistake was *not* in trying to "streamline" or Americanize our organizational form. The decisive thing is the political content of our organization, and that is precisely where our revisionist line had its foundations. But organizational forms are indissolubly bound up with content, and therefore decisive changes in organization must be made simultaneously as we correct our revisionist policies. The proper combination of political content and form will enhance our influence and prestige as an organization of American Communists.

The Community Club shall remain a major and important form of the organization. However, since the size, the practices and the content of the existing clubs have greatly undermined the independent leading role of the Party, weakened the ties with the membership and distorted the Communist concept of the rights,

responsibilities and duties which accompany membership in our organization, immediate steps shall be taken to adapt the organization of the Community Club to the main objective of re-establishing the vanguard role of the Party.

The size of the Community Club shall be greatly reduced to make possible the establishment of more homogeneous and clearly-defined Communist Clubs, clubs which can readily secure a knowledge of their membership and develop greater mobility in carrying through their decisions and tasks.

The establishment of smaller clubs shall not be regarded as a return to the units of years ago. The opening up of club headquarters, the development of more popular forms of bringing the position of the Communist club to the people of the community, is today more essential than ever before. But there is no reason why Community headquarters cannot be maintained under these conditions with a number of clubs utilizing central headquarters, known to the community as the club-rooms of the Party in a given area or town. Furthermore, the public political character of the club must be greatly expanded so as to win the acceptance of the club in the community mass movements. Only a club which speaks out regularly to the people in the community on the burning issues of the day, develops a many-sided activity program which will give leadership to the solution

of these issues; strengthens as an organization its relationship with other leaders and organizations in the community; reaches the community regularly through forums, leaflets, literature and the *Daily Worker*—can hope to win the respect and confidence of the community and become an accepted participant of the anti-fascist democratic community movement.

During the past period, the elimination of the shop form of organization has greatly weakened the ties of the C.P.A. with the workers in the basic industries, thereby actually hindering our working-class members from making their maximum contribution to our own organization and the labor movement, influencing negatively our ability to win the labor movement for correct policies. The trend, for the first time in many years, of a decline in the industrial composition of our membership, is due in no small measure to the fact that the shop form of organization was dissolved and the community club did not provide the trade unionists with the necessary guidance for the solution of the complex problems they faced daily. While we must not ignore the consideration which led to the dissolution of the shop form, namely, the strengthening and maintenance of our ties with the progressive forces within the labor movement, we must simultaneously strengthen our organization among the decisive sections of the working class and provide a me-

dium through which the shop workers can be involved in the development of policies that affect the labor movement and our nation. For this reason your committee is firmly convinced that the shop branch shall be reconstituted as a basic form of Communist organization.

In the opinion of your committee, emphasis shall be placed upon the shop and *not* the industrial form of organization. We say this because the shop form of organization has the advantage of enabling the Communists to influence and raise the working class understanding and consciousness of their fellow-workers with whom they are in constant contact. This is not so in the industrial branch. An industrial branch does not decisively facilitate these objectives. Its members are not able to be in closer and more effective daily contact with masses of workers. Of course, the industrial branch may serve the purpose of bringing the Communists of a given industry together to exchange opinions, but that is far from the full role and purposes of a Communist club. Furthermore, shop clubs are one of the keys to concentration in the basic industries. Shop clubs, as distinct from industrial clubs, will also prevent depleting the community club of all its trade union and shop workers, which could only lead to further weakening the effectiveness of the community club as an organization which must react to and defend the needs of the work-

ing class within the community. We shall consider establishing shop clubs especially in the large shops in the basic industries where such organization will strengthen the role and activity of the workers, guarantee more effective mobilization of our membership and more consistent growth of our organization, and in industries where the Communist organization is especially weak and must be rapidly strengthened.

With the establishment of smaller-sized community clubs, many of the main cities and regions will have a larger number of clubs than heretofore. To provide more direct leadership, state organizations shall take under consideration the re-establishment of organizations on a county, Congressional or Assembly district basis.

To provide a direct link with the membership and help to involve the active members from the clubs in the direct formulation of policies, the state organizations shall give serious consideration to the establishment in the counties or other subdivisions delegated bodies representative of the clubs—County Councils—as the key leading body within the subdivision. Such delegated Councils are not to be viewed as merely functionaries' meetings, which convene at given intervals to listen to a report, but shall become working bodies which have the opportunity of discussing and determining policies with the delegates drawn into committees, and regularly reporting back

to their clubs the problems discussed and decided upon in the Council.

Because we erred so heavily in neglecting the time-tested Communist principle of democratic centralism, we must emphasize that these principles are embodied in Articles VI and VII. Let me restate briefly our concept of democratic centralism.

Democratic centralism is the method of functioning of the Communist organization which combines the maximum democracy in the shaping of policy and the election of all leadership with sufficient centralization of committee authority to guarantee immediate reaction to problems and speedy mobilization of the entire membership and organization around the fulfillment of key tasks. Democratic centralism thus guarantees that all leading committees are elected by the membership and all basic problems are discussed and shaped by the membership. The elected leadership has the responsibility to report systematically to the membership on the actions and decisions taken by the higher committee. But once decisions are made in the higher committees, these decisions become the line of activity for the membership as a whole.

Centralization with formal democracy can never be successful. The fusion of democracy and centralism can only be achieved on the basis of constant common activity and struggle of the entire membership of the Party, operating through clubs where

general policies are discussed and elaborated to meet the specific conditions and problems of that area.

We recognize the failure of our leadership to provide true democracy in the Party. Equally important, however, was our failure to help the membership equip itself theoretically in our Marxist-Leninist science so that it could most effectively exercise initiative and effectively take part in formulating and executing policies.

We must be alert to distortions of democratic centralism, whether it be in the form of restating an old I.W.W. syndicalist theory that leaders should not hold office longer than one year, or the pure-and-simple trade union theory that everything must be submitted to a referendum vote before the Party leadership can institute or carry through a policy or campaign. On the other hand, it is not practicing democratic centralism for a State Committee to send out a series of questions to all Clubs on a very vital subject, and expect answers, without indicating the thinking of that leadership as to what the policy on the given subject should be.

Much has already been said about methods of leadership. Suffice it here to emphasize that in the Constitution we place before you we propose that the National Committee shall meet at least three times a year, instead of permitting a lapse of ten months as was the case between our 1944 Convention and the first meeting of the National Committee elec-

ted there. Policies shall be worked out in consultation with the key Communists concerned, even if they are not on the Committee. New major policies shall be brought to the membership for discussion. Efforts shall be systematically made to recheck the correctness of policies through the National Committee members having close contact with the members in key shops, basic industries and decisive areas. A committee system of work involving most of the members of the National Committee shall be established. The most important weapon in improving both the policies and the functioning of the membership and leadership of a Communist Party is that of self-criticism. Only an organization of Communists can make skillful use of this important weapon and not injure itself. It is well to recall the experiences of the CPSU on this question as stated in the *History of the CPSU*:

A party is invincible if it does not fear criticism and self-criticism, if it does not gloss over the mistakes and defects in its work, if it teaches and educates its cadres by drawing the lessons from the mistakes in Party work, and if it knows how to correct its mistakes in time.

A party perishes if it conceals its mistakes, if it glosses over sore problems, if it covers up its shortcomings by pretending that all is well, if it is intolerant of criticism and self-criticism, if it gives way to self-complacency and vainglory and if it rests on its laurels.

Many of us, including myself, who used to know and use effectively the weapon of self-criticism, began to commit precisely the things warned against in this quotation. I think the entire Party will watch carefully every leader to see that his future actions square with his words.

Let me call your attention to a different concept of officers proposed in this amended Constitution. The old Constitution provided for the election of officers by the State and National Conventions. We propose that the State Committees and the National Committee shall elect not only their Executive Board but all the officers they deem necessary. The Constitution indicates by name only the post of Chairman, leaving the balance of officers to be decided upon by the National Committee and each State Committee, although it is clear that several secretaries and a treasurer will be needed in every case.

This concept of leadership emphasized that the authority rests in committees and not in individuals. It builds upon the premise of the collective, rather than the individual officers. It makes the officers responsible to the committee, with the committee having authority to change officers without waiting for a convention. This works out for a greater democratic practice. It is the practice in all other Communist Parties.

Lastly, we have added a new Article entitled National Review Commission. Section I of that article thus explains its purpose:

In order to strengthen, as well as review, the integrity and resoluteness of our cadres, to guard against violations of Party principles, to maintain and strengthen discipline, to supervise the audits of the financial books and records of the National Committee of the Party, the National Convention shall elect a National Review Commission.

Suffice it to add that during this past period when there was great looseness in organizational concepts and functioning, there was also a complete dulling of all vigilance. Numerous problems exist or have arisen, that have never been followed through. With proper alertness, serious consequences could be averted by preventative methods. It is for these and other reasons outlined that we urge favorable action on this new Article. With these remarks I would like to move approval of Articles VI, VII and VIII after we act on each section seriatim.

THE NEED FOR A CONSISTENT CONCENTRATION POLICY

Before voting on the final motion to accept the Constitution as a whole as amended, I would like to make some extended concluding remarks. The Constitution we have agreed upon article by article is a correct Marxist document. But the key to fulfilling our Communist responsibility to the working class and the nation is not only in correct policy but in our ability to carry out this correct policy. This is where we must

adhere to a fixed course—not through mere talk, but above all a fixed course of action.

I would like to emphasize in this connection that the war against militarist Japan which must be vigorously prosecuted in order completely to smash Japanese imperialism and assist the liberation movements of the peoples in Asia, together with the accompanying political struggle against reaction at home, emphasizes the tasks before our Party. To make the American working class conscious of its role as the best defender of the interests of the nation and all the working people, and to prepare it to assert its independent organized power, is not only the central task of our Party today but a possibility which can be fulfilled in life itself. To achieve this objective, there are certain things that particularly stand out and need attention:

1. Despite our larger membership today, we are not always as effective as we should be because of the lack of political understanding among sections of our membership and the less effective functioning of our Clubs.

2. We have had a decline in our industrial and trade union composition for the first time in 6 years. In only 7 districts have we a slight majority of industrial workers. In only one district—Michigan—have we a majority of our members from basic industries.

3. During this past year, progressive workers, including Communists,

have suffered certain losses of influence among important local groups of organized workers in a number of industries. While this can be balanced by certain successes, the overall picture is unsatisfactory.

4. Our press circulation among workers in basic industries is far from satisfactory.

5. As part of our entire revisionist line with its liquidationist tendencies, we have committed the most serious crime against the workers of the South—first of all the Negro workers and people—in the complete liquidation of the Communist movement, both in name and concept. This action in the South can be understood and dealt with only as part of our entire policy. The difference is one of degree. In the South we dropped the name *Communist* with the political act of dissolution of the Party and did not even retain the organizational forms of the Communist movement. This was discussed and decided upon by the former National Board. It was thereafter discussed at a meeting of Southern delegates after the C.P.A. convention. For this action in the South the National Board as a whole is responsible, as it was for the entire wrong policy. The educational and press associations of Southern Marxists that were substituted could never fulfill the role of a Communist movement, but we now hear that some of them capitulated almost completely to many reactionary white chauvinist practices of the

South in day-to-day functioning. Clearly, we must correct this grave mistake at this convention and adopt special measures by the incoming Board that will immediately guarantee the reconstitution of the Communist Party in every Southern state.

In analyzing our tasks in the light of these circumstances we must always keep in mind two factors—the tremendous growth of the trade union movement—but also the influx of *non-working class elements* into industry during the war that has created many problems still unsolved for the growing trade union movement. While labor, in pursuing its own independent line, will be in a better position to establish democratic unity of all anti-fascist and democratic forces, we Communists, while noting this, must simultaneously help the working class to stand on its own feet politically and free itself from the influence of the monopolies and their ideologists.

We Communists must adopt a program of *concentration tasks* as part of that necessary fixed course from which we must not deviate. This means:

1. To help organize the influence of the working class and its organizations for speeding victory over militarist Japan, for maintaining unity of the Big Three on the basis of the Teheran and Yalta agreements, for rooting out all fascist and reactionary influence at home, for defeating all provocations of employers aimed at breaking the unity

and organization of labor, and for stimulating the organization of the unorganized. Therefore, we must concentrate all Party work in such a manner as to have our strongest roots and decisive membership and influence among the workers in the basic industries and large shops.

2. We must activate the maximum number of Communists in these concentration areas, among the masses and in workers' organizations. To achieve this, we shall shift forces, including key national forces, into the leadership of concentration districts and areas.

3. We must understand the specific problems confronting the Negro people with the beginning of postwar reconversion, and the resulting ferment and moods of struggle amongst the Negro people. To meet this problem, the Party must, as part of the concentration policy, direct sustained attention to this problem and give greater attention to training working-class Negro Communist cadres.

4. That this Convention shall decide, in consultation with our Southern friends, immediately to rebuild the Communist Party in the South, especially in the industrial areas.

5. We must, as part of this concentration, work out special plans for concentration amongst Italian and Polish-Americans in the basic industries.

TASKS OF CONCENTRATION

Clearly, every district must adopt a policy of concentration work. This

applies no less to New York than to Michigan.

What does concentration signify for us under present-day conditions? It means:

1. To strive to influence all mass organizations to root themselves among the basic workers.

2. To direct our work in such a manner as to guarantee that all industrial districts, particularly New York, California and Eastern Pennsylvania, shall have a membership whose majority is industrial workers. That Michigan, Illinois and Ohio shall aim at 75 per cent industrial workers.

3. To give a hundred times greater attention by the Party Committees, as far as speakers, literature, organizers and press are concerned, to the so-called small industrial towns, such as McKeesport, Schenectady, Youngstown, Akron, Flint, Gary, and towns in the Anthracite and West Virginia.

4. To mobilize the entire Party membership to direct its work in such a way as to be conscious at all times of the need to strengthen our position in basic industries.

5. To concentrate on increasing the circulation of the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker* among the workers in all concentration industries, districts and areas, and to speed the issuance of editions of *The Worker* in Illinois, Michigan and Ohio.

6. To center our cadre policy upon developing and promoting Party leadership from among the most promising active members in the concentration industries and shops.

Let us declare with resoluteness that this course of concentration will be adhered to, no matter what obstacles may confront us. In fact this is the only course that will carry us through all storms.

With this I propose that the Convention vote approval of the Constitution in its entirety as amended.