

# The Party Crisis and the Way Out, Part II

By William Z. Foster

*In our December issue the first half of this article was published. As we then pointed out, this article is in the form of a reply to a series of articles by the well-known Communist leader, Alexander Bittelman, which appeared in the New York Daily Worker. Readers should bear in mind that Comrade Foster wrote what follows in October.*

*We are happy to be able to report that William Z. Foster continues to make steady progress in his recovery from the cerebral hemorrhage that hit him late in October—Ed.*

## THE BITTELMAN THESIS

HAVING SHOWN IN the previous installment: a) the means by which the Communist Party was built successfully in its earlier years, and b) the causes of the Party's present crisis, it now remains to determine what the Party's policy should be in the light of the present changed and changing economic and political situation here and abroad.

The Right takes a position that the basic theories and methods by which we built the Party in the first place, are now all completely out of date; in short, that the Party and its Marxism-Leninism are obsolete. Comrade Bittelman's articles in the *Daily Worker* tend essentially in this general Right direction. They tend to support, in general, the Gates position which has been po-

litically bankrupt ever since its two main programmatic proposals—the transformation of the Communist Party into a political action association, and the emasculation of Marxism-Leninism—were rejected overwhelmingly by the national convention of the CPUSA, last February.

Bittelman avoids such gross political formulations as those of Gates, and he uses the terminology of Marxism-Leninism in his analysis. But much of the substance is gone from Bittelman's Marxist phraseology, and it all boils down essentially to the main Gates proposition. Besides this Gates' backbone, there are also elements of Lovestone American exceptionalism in the Bittelman thesis, as it seeks to break down the Party's struggle against this insidious bourgeois ideology. And it also contains

elements of the Browder-Teheran thesis, with its over-estimation of the degree of peaceful co-existence attained, and its understatement of the aggressive role of American imperialism.

The articles of Comrade Bittelman have as their political center the proposition that the capitalist system, both generally and on an international scale, including the United States, is now entering, or has practically entered upon, an intermediate social stage somewhere between monopoly capitalism and Socialism. Internationally, this stage is peaceful co-existence, and nationally it is the Welfare State. While Bittelman speaks of both these situations as "emerging," his whole argument and program are based upon the assumption that they have virtually "emerged." This major conclusion Bittelman buttresses with another one to the general effect that, as a consequence of the above intermediate development, the world struggle between the forces of world imperialism and those of Socialism, and also the national class struggle, have been muted almost to the vanishing point.

Comrade Bittelman draws a picture of a world capitalism which, despite its weakened position, has largely solved its inner contradictions; for he makes no mention of the general crisis of the capitalist system, which has been disintegrating that system ever since World War I and the Russian Revolution. He also sees no cyclical economic

crises of importance ahead for capitalism. Apparently, in the post-war boom the crisis has disappeared, to the extent that he no longer considers it worth mentioning. Bittelman also minimizes the powerful antagonism of American imperialism against the Socialist world. He speaks of American imperialism, its ambitions for world control, and the potential war danger which this creates; but he does this largely in the sense that these dangers are potential rather than actual. He makes it look as though the Cold War is over and that peaceful co-existence is practically here; hence the job now is "to usher in this period fully and completely . . . to insure its stability and to prevent backsliding into the Cold War or into the immeasurable disaster of a new world war" (Part III). He speaks of all this as constituting "a new historical period of considerable duration." Generally, the matter of active struggle against the aggressive foreign policy of Wall Street as a basic condition for *establishing* peaceful co-existence, fades away.

Comrade Bittelman presents a similar picture of an American capitalism which has substantially overcome its major inner contradictions. He sees numerous serious market problems facing the system; but apparently these will produce no major economic crises, for the latter are not foreseen in his analysis. On the contrary, he evidently looks toward a future of relatively easy develop-

ment economically in the general direction of Socialism, without basic economic breakdowns in the meantime.

Bittelman also apparently sees no future big strikes and other struggles between the workers and the monopolists, or if he does contemplate such he does not consider them vital enough to make them part of his general picture. His vague references to struggle, therefore, have no real point. In his articles, the American class struggle, like the international anti-imperialist struggle, largely evaporates, with erstwhile ruthless American imperialism playing more and more a passive role. This whole outlook presents essentially the same perspective of progressive or easy victories, a relatively struggle-less evolution towards Socialism, as that presented by Comrade Gates in his article in *Political Affairs* of November, 1956.

The heart of Comrade Bittelman's general national conception is in his handling of the question of the Welfare State. He makes no real analysis of just what he means by the welfare state, but obviously he considers it in general terms as definitely an intermediate regime between monopoly capitalism and Socialism. In fact, he says, "the conclusion, therefore, is that the welfare state is a distinct historic stage in American social progress, and that the peaceful and constitutional transition to Socialism is another, the next and higher stage." (Part III). In Bittelman's general analysis all

the power and fighting spirit of American monopoly capital has suddenly almost disappeared, and the fascist danger, which during the sharpest period of the Cold War raised its head so menacingly in McCarthyism, has vanished without a trace. He has generally a concept of a peaceful social evolution, with but little class struggle and with monopoly capital unable or unwilling to make any serious resistance.

In Comrade Bittelman's analysis of a peacefully and almost automatically evolving capitalist society towards Socialism, naturally the part to be played by the Communist Party becomes vastly different and far less important than in the past. Certainly, the Party would have very little leading or fighting to do. This is because, as Bittelman apparently would have us conclude: a) there would be very little class struggle in general, and b) the mass organizations, grown mature politically, would be able to lead their own fight effectively, with little or no assistance from the Communist Party. In this sense Bittelman signalizes "the rise of the American trade union movement to a position of effective leadership of the working class in the economic and political field, and to a certain extent also in the ideological field." And he adds that "something similar is taking place among the movements of the Negro people and among the farmers."

Obviously, such a general concept would leave but little for the Communist Party to do, except to tail

after the respective mass movements, to point out their lesser weaknesses, and to propagate for Socialism. It would mean the practical obliteration of the Party's vanguard role, notwithstanding Comrade Bittelman's constant reference to it. This is also essentially the concept behind Comrade Gates' political action association. Bittelman speaks for the building of a mass Marxist-Leninist Party, one that will eventually have behind it the majority of the working class; but he does not explain how this broad Party could be built, in view of the slim functions allotted by him to it in the class struggle.

#### THE LINE OF THE 16th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Like Comrade Gates' program, Comrade Bittelman's thesis, as we shall see, is in direct and major conflict with the general political line worked out at our recent national convention and incorporated in its main resolution. Although, as we have noted earlier, there are some secondary weaknesses in this resolution, due to the strong Revisionist influence in the Party, the general political direction of the resolution is sound. And it goes directly against the main thesis developed by Comrade Bittelman in his articles—notwithstanding his repeated endorsements, in words, of the line of the convention.

Before developing this point, let us take a look at the changing world situation. During the past period,

beginning with the Russian Revolution in 1917, but especially since World War II, vast and rapid changes politically have been taking place in the world. On the one hand, shattered by two great world wars, torn by various Socialist and colonial revolutionary movements, and weakened from within by the broad growth of trade unions, workers' parties, and other essentially anti-capitalist organizations—world capitalism sinks deeper and deeper into general crisis. And on the other hand, a vast system of Socialist states has been created, embracing over one-third of humanity; many erstwhile colonial countries have broken their imperialist chains and, with an increasingly pro-Socialist orientation, have embarked upon a course of political independence; and a great growth of working-class organizations, as indicated, has taken place throughout the capitalist world. The general effect of all this is that the world center of actual economic and political strength has been moving more and more towards world Socialism—indeed, it may well be that this center of world political gravity is already on the side of Socialism. This shift has been especially dramatized by the sensational launching of the Soviet satellite, Sputnik, an event which threw American capitalists almost into panic.

Obviously, this tremendous alteration in the relationship of class forces between the world's workers and world monopoly capital has also pro-

foundly changed the conditions of the struggle between them, both nationally and internationally. Monopoly can no longer dominate the world as it once did. This was decisively proved when the combined peace forces of the world, from 1947 on, blocked, at least temporarily, the atomic drive of American imperialism for war and world conquest and brought this great power to the negotiating table in Geneva in 1955. This was an historic event, a tremendous victory, shared in by our Party; but one that the Right has characteristically belittled and misrepresented.

Comrade Bittelman sees the new situation in the world, but unfortunately, in his articles he draws exaggerated conclusions from all this. Thus, he apparently believes that the peace fight is already won. This could be a most dangerous error. That the war danger, although lessened, is still with us is being graphically demonstrated by Khrushchev's dramatic letter of October 15th to the Socialist Parties of Western Europe, asking them to be on guard against the attempts to organize a highly dangerous war against Syria. Let us rejoice that the peace forces of the world have become so militant and powerful, but let us not jump the gun by practically assuming that they still have no basic tasks ahead of them. Monopoly capital must be compelled to accept peaceful co-existence. It will never do so voluntarily. It has not yet capitulated, strong pressure must still be brought

to bear upon it. This is what is not seen in the Bittelman articles, but it could be a major disaster for us thus to neglect it.

This was the fundamental line of the 16th national convention of the CPUSA, which worked with a keen sense of rapidly changing conditions. It warned against "false conceptions that peaceful co-existence is already assured or that it will come about automatically." And it also warned, that "the imperialists have not reconciled themselves to the relationship of forces which makes this perspective [of peace] possible" (*Proceedings*, p. 263). To relax the peace struggle now, in a spirit of over-confidence, could be disastrous, and this is one of the main weaknesses of the Bittelman articles.

In the United States itself, the monopolists also feel the pressure of the new strength of labor and of world Socialism, and they can no longer dictate to the workers in their former brutal manner. They are compelled to make concessions to the workers and their allies for several basic reasons, among them: a) the favorable labor market for the workers; b) the greater inherent strength of labor's organizations; c) the pressures, favorable to the workers in all countries, including the United States, of advancing world Socialism; d) and because the employers must seek, through concessions, class collaboration, and when need be, violence, to keep the conservatively-led trade unions and workers' parties lined up in their all-out capitalist

front against the countries of Socialism.

But let us not be deceived by all these concessions. The capitalist beast has been wounded, but he remains extremely dangerous—he is still the capitalist, seeking to gain profits at any cost. The most harmful thing that could happen to the working class would be for it to fall into moods of complacency, which is what the Bittelman thesis would tend to create. In contrast to Bittelman's conception, the Party convention put forth a distinct perspective of class struggle, and in doing this it was fundamentally correct. The convention struck this keynote with the statement that, "Titanic economic and political struggles will intervene in our country before the majority of the people take the path to Socialism" (*Proceedings*, p. 305). There is no trace of any such fighting perspective in Bittelman's placid thesis.

The CPUSA convention line also did not agree with Comrade Bittelman's over-optimistic estimate of the economic outlook—he shows no perspective whatever for future severe economic cyclical crises. This is a Keynesian trend. Although the convention made no definite immediate economic forecast, it did indicate very clearly that economic crises were to be expected. It said: "Hence, despite the prolonged prosperity and despite the significant effects of the new features that have emerged in the American economy, the basic contradictions inherent in

capitalist production are not abating, but are becoming sharper. The fundamental factors making for economic crisis continue to operate today no less than in the boom of the twenties" (*Proceedings*, p. 257). Undoubtedly stormy days economically are ahead for American and world capitalism.

Comrade Bittelman's theory that the trade unions have now achieved "effective political leadership" for the working class also does not jibe with reality or with the line of the 16th national convention of the Party. Of course, the unions have made great progress in the past 20 years. There are hosts of honest and forward-looking trade-union officials; but there are also many who are neither of these things. In fact, the great bulk of the unions are now dominated by a conservative leadership, without a peer in this respect in the capitalist world, and they have harmful policies to fit. The truth is that in the American labor movement, instead of coming from such corrupt and conservative elements, the progressive leadership has always come from the pressure of the Left and Progressive forces, and there is no good reason to suppose that it will be otherwise in the near future. These forces, working together, built the modern trade-union movement, and for the most part, they did it in the face of violent opposition from the conservative leadership. The 16th national convention, while taking full cognizance of the recent great progress of the trade

unions, did not speak of them in the sense of their having achieved "effective political leadership of the working class." Instead, it said: "The spontaneous struggles of the working class against capitalism can, at best, lead only to trade-union consciousness." (*Proceedings*, p. 323). Trade unions as such are not enough: the working class must have its mass party; in this case, a Labor-Farmer Party.

The convention, with its general conception of the leading role of the conscious forces of Socialism, forecast for the Party a far broader perspective of action than that outlined by Comrade Bittelman in his thesis, in which the Communist Party essentially tails along after the "matured" organizations, especially the trade unions. The convention definitely considered the Party in the role of vanguard, both now and in the future struggle for Socialism. It summed up its perspective in this general respect in its resolution as follows: "It emphasizes that *all* roads to Socialism are roads of mass struggle, waged under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist vanguard." (*Proceedings*, p. 305.) Clearly, this means a continuing vanguard role for the Party from now on, for the Party could hardly first play a passive role and then step in at the last moment, so to speak, and take over the class leadership in the fight for Socialism. Those who see no vanguard role for the Party in the everyday struggles of the working class, by the same token,

also, discard the vanguard role of the Party in the ultimate struggle for Socialism. A militant forecast of future struggle in no sense conflicts with the Party's correct perspective of the possibility in the United States of a peaceful and parliamentary road to Socialism; for such a peaceful advance can only be realized by a powerful labor movement, able and willing to suppress the counter-revolutionary attempts of the monopolists and to maintain the necessary democracy in the country to enable the workers to proceed peacefully to their historic class goal of Socialism.

During the past generation or so the workers of the United States have won many concessions from monopoly capital.

This wide reform trend has been variously characterized under such titles as, "The New Capitalism" (1920's), "Progressive Capitalism" (Roosevelt era), and "The Welfare State" and "People's Capitalism" (post-World War II). The trends have also been expressed in bourgeois election programs variously known as "The New Freedom" (Wilson), "The Square Deal" (T. Roosevelt), "The New Deal" (F. D. Roosevelt), "The Fair Deal" (Truman), and "Modern Republicanism" (Eisenhower).

Making a virtue of necessity, the bourgeois apologists have built up a whole series of illusions around the reform trend, including, that capitalism is now a humane regime, peaceful and progressive; that the government has become a democratic peo-

ple's state standing above the class struggle and operating in the interests of the whole people; that the workers and employers have now become virtually economic and political partners; that economic crises and mass unemployment are now things of the past; that the rule of finance capital has been liquidated by the elimination of the banker's role from private industry; that capitalists in general have been virtually ousted by the "managerial revolution"; that the workers are buying out the industries; that capital is being democratized, etc. These demagogic generalizations have been built up over the years by many bourgeois economists and politicians, as well as Right Social Democratic writers, but the main theoretical contributors have been Keynes, Strachey, Burnham, and Djilas.

The basic purposes of such demagogic generalizations—as currently, the welfare state and people's capitalism—is to confine the developing struggle of the workers and their allies within channels safe for capitalism. They defend the capitalist system against advancing Socialism. Specifically, they aim at spreading all kinds of crippling "prosperity illusions" among the workers; to extoll the efficiency and beneficence of capitalism; to cultivate class-collaboration practices in industry; to maintain intact the workers' allegiance to the two party system; to poison the people's minds with anti-Soviet, anti-Socialist lies; and especially to cover with a mantle

of innocence the aggressive foreign policies of American imperialism.

The attitude of the CPUSA towards these general developments which, in one form or another, it has had to deal with almost since its birth, is two-fold. On the one hand, the Party has vigorously supported, often pioneered in fact, every substantial reform, of whatever kind or source, that will help the workers. This it did, among others, under Roosevelt, Truman, and also even under Eisenhower. At the same time, as it did at its 16th national convention, with its slogan for a people's anti-monopoly coalition, the Party has projected slogans for a democratic anti-monopoly government within the framework of the capitalist system; one which would vastly expand all the democratic concessions that the workers, over the years, have won from the employers and their government. On the other hand, the Party has warred against all the pro-capitalist, anti-Socialist demagogies that have been always tied up with such slogans as the "New Capitalism," the "Welfare State," and "People's Capitalism." In this respect, through the years, the CPUSA has perhaps done its best ideological educational work among the masses.

Comrade Bittelman, however, would have us abandon this basically correct policy. He proposes, instead, that we support as our own the slogan for the welfare state. But this would be a serious mistake for various reasons and a long leap to the



Right. Bittelman makes a number of mistakes with his proposal: For one thing, he ignores the fact that the "Welfare State," like "People's Capitalism," is already here, with all its illusions and limitations, as part of the general monopoly state set-up; it is not something that is to be established in the more or less distant future. The United States, Great Britain, France, and other regimes of monopoly capital, are, in fact, at present "Welfare States," with all the confusion that this term implies. The type of state that would be created by a victory of the anti-monopoly coalition proposed by our Party, and which Comrade Bittelman holds necessary for bringing about the welfare state, would, however, create a quite different type of government—one committed to a serious struggle against monopoly capital. Our adoption of the welfare state slogan, therefore, would put us, willy-nilly, in the false and untenable position of supporting the present welfare state.

Comrade Bittelman is also incorrect when he attempts to establish a basic difference between the slogan for the welfare state and that for people's capitalism. For the two are akin politically, and in labor circles in this country the latter slogan is probably more popular than the former. The welfare state slogan is the people's capitalism slogan dolled up for the use primarily of Right Social Democrats. It is essentially an attempt to have the workers peddle away their Socialist birthright for a

mess of bourgeois pottage.

The welfare state slogan is also wrong in that it implies that, through the reforms indicated, a basic change has taken place in the structure of the capitalist state—that capitalism is gradually turning into Socialism; that the state is no longer a repressive organ; that it does not function primarily in the interests of the monopolists; and that the power of the latter in the welfare state is practically broken. Nor could our Party, try as it might, give a more real content to this slogan. The nonsense of the welfare state illusions regarding this country is obvious from even a glance at the composition of the United States Government, in which the working class, Negro people, poorer farmers, and women, who make up the great majority of the American people, have barely a trace of representation. Those who doubt the power of monopoly capital in this country today would do well to read Victor Perlo's new book, *The Empire of High Finance*.

The adoption of the welfare state slogan would expose our Party to all the ideological confusion bound up with this slogan. This would be so, particularly in view of the strong Revisionist trend to accommodate the Party to such illusions. Even Comrade Bittelman, in his analysis of the welfare state, presents it almost entirely in a positive sense, leaving out altogether the many dangerous anti-Socialist, pro-capitalist illusions that are connected inseparably with this slogan.

Comrade Bittelman is likewise incorrect when he says that the Party has not analysed the New Deal and the consequences of the reforms flowing out of it, which have since developed into what is vaguely known as the welfare state and people's capitalism. The contrary is the case. The difference is, that, in its extensive analyses, the Party correctly arrived at an opposite conclusion from Comrade Bittelman. This it expressed at its 16th national convention: first, positively, by its militant support of all immediate demands that will aid the workers, and second, negatively, by its opposition to the "prosperity illusions" slogans.

In view of the foregoing, therefore, the Party should reject Comrade Bittelman's proposal that it adopt the welfare state slogan, and it should push forward to realize its slogan for a people's anti-monopoly coalition government and all its immediate implications.

#### THE PARTY: ITS THEORY AND PRACTICE

a) *The Communist Party*: From the foregoing consideration of the changed national and international situation, the way our Party was built, how it fell into crisis, and the decisions of the 16th national convention of the Party, three basic conclusions stand forth with unchallengeable clarity. The first is that we must build the Communist Party, and upon as broad a basis as possible. We must also build the

Party upon a permanent scale. The CPUSA is not a part-time or stop-gap Party, to serve only until we can get a "better" organization—either the "political action association" or "the new mass party of Socialism"—as so many of our leaders so harmfully believe. The Marxist-Leninist Party is the best type of leading Party in every contingency that the working class may face—in periods of prosperity, under fascist terror, during imperialist wars, in colonial revolution, in the winning of power in capitalist lands, and in the building of Socialism. Comrade Gates is basically in error when he says (*Political Affairs*, November, 1956), that the CPUSA is geared to the prospect of an early revolution. On the contrary, it is geared to every possible political situation that the workers may confront. On this permanent basis, therefore (whatever its name may be) we must set out to build the CPUSA, something which should have been begun actively right after the national convention, but was not.

One of the major things that we must also do in the building of our Party is to "rehabilitate it ideologically." That is, while absorbing genuine criticism, we must clear away the heaps of unjustified belittlements and misrepresentations of the Party, its record, and its leadership that were cast upon it from the Right during the past 18 months or so. We must learn again to love the Party, to esteem its great record, its historic fight against the war danger and fas-

cism, and to have confidence in its bright future in the labor movement and class struggle.

The CPUSA must resume its agitation for the eventual formation of a mass Labor Farmer Party—as the workers, generally on the march, are obviously moving towards independent political action. In this agitation, however, we must, as the main resolution states, realize that the Labor-Farmer Party is “not the only form” of mass political action—there may eventually be much broader coalitions, and we see now that there may also be far narrower ones. Its neglect of the Labor-Farmer Party slogan has been one of the most serious shortcomings in the history of the Communist Party.

We should discard completely the slogans for a political action association and for a new mass party of Socialism, (in the immediate sense in which the latter is put), as liquidatory, both of the Labor-Farmer Party movement and of the Communist Party. We must co-operate more freely with the other Left groups in immediate class struggle activities; but it is not our job to combine with them in forming another Social Democratic Party. The basic organizational meeting grounds of all the Left groups are in the trade unions and in the broad political organizations of the organized workers and their allies, all of which will eventually tend to develop more of an anti-capitalist perspective.

b) *Marxism - Leninism*: The CPUSA, as the convention so vigor-

ously emphasized, must be based definitely upon the fundamental “universally valid” principles of Marxism-Leninism, not for the time being, but all the way through the workers’ perspective. Of course, the Party must use the utmost flexibility in applying and interpreting Marxism-Leninism for the masses, adapting it to the sharpening American situation. At the same time, our Party must combat the many pro-capitalism illusions now being spread among the workers. We must also be resolute in combatting Revisionist attempts to water-down and to de-vitalize Marxism-Leninism, and likewise, every “Left”-sectarian tendency to apply it in dogmatic or doctrinaire fashion. These are the most vital lessons that have come out of the long Party debate.

The criticism, heard so much from the Right, that Marxism-Leninism is inherently rigid and lacks the flexibility to meet the complex problems ahead of the workers in this and other countries in the rapidly changing world situation, is flatly contradicted by the whole history of the international Communist movement. Not only has Marxism-Leninism provided the theories and leadership for the workers and their allies by which they have established Socialism throughout one third of the world, but in doing this it has displayed extraordinary adaptability to new situations—not to deny, however, that there has also been much dogmatism and sectarian inflexibility. Our task, therefore, is to improve

Marxism-Leninism and to develop it, not to undermine and destroy it. There is nothing in the world more new and vital than Marxism-Leninism.

c) *The class struggle policy:* Together with building the Communist Party and imbuing it with Marxist-Leninist principles, it is also necessary to apply these principles upon the basis of a rising class struggle perspective in this country. This elementary lesson the 16th national convention also stressed. Its line in this respect had nothing in common with the easy evolution perspectives developed by comrades Gates and Bittelman. Its general militant line was summed up in its active projection of the fight for a broad anti-monopoly people's coalition of all the democratic forces in the United States.

Manifestly there are generating very important mass struggles in this country. There is the ever-present struggle against the war danger and for peace, which deeply concerns the whole American people. Our Party must learn how to become active effectively among the broad masses in this elemental struggle. The great offensive of the Negro people for school desegregation in the South, for the right to vote, and against every form of Jim Crowism, indicates the tremendous struggle potentials in the present American political situation. The trade unions are also deeply stirred by the uncertain economic situation, the problem of automation, the rack-

eteering question, the "right-to-work" laws, and many other serious problems. The recent strikes of the farmers, and their obvious political discontent, show the possibilities also in this most important democratic sector of the population.

All these problems are tending to sharpen up, especially as the industrial situation becomes more unsatisfactory and the problems of American imperialism abroad multiply on every world front. The people are widely tending to have more serious clashes with monopoly capitalism. In order to play its political part in this rising mass discontent, the Party must, as it did in the 16th convention, base its policies upon the perspective of a sharpening class struggle. It would be disastrous for the Party to yield to the class peace conceptions of a diminishing class struggle and an expectation of easy victories ahead for the workers, which the Revisionists for the past 18 months have been so busily propagating in the Party.

#### THE CONCRETE APPLICATION OF MARXIST-LENINIST PRINCIPLES

We have seen above how it emerges from our total past experience that we must apply three basic Marxist-Leninist lessons: a) to build the Communist Party, b) to base it upon the sound principles of Marxism-Leninism, and c) to animate it with a fighting policy based upon the perspective of a rising class struggle.

gle in the United States. All this is fundamental, but we must go further and show concretely how the principles of Marxism-Leninism are to be applied in the present situation, which is so greatly changed from that of the early days of our Party. Pertinent, in doing this will it be to take the same seven basic Marxist-Leninist principles dealt with at the outset of this analysis in showing how our Party was built, and then see how differently these valid principles apply in the new situation of these days.

One: *Socialist Perspective*: In this general and important respect the CPUSA is very much better off than it used to be. This is because it now foresees a road to Socialism in this country that will appear as very realistic and much more acceptable to American workers. The Party must know how to make the most of this very valuable point. The Party has also a more realistic attitude towards the Soviet Union, with its new attitude of comradely criticism of that country. This also removes a great handicap that the Party suffered from in the past. But the Party must eliminate from its work the recently developed Right tendencies to snipe at the USSR and to minimize its past, present, and future Socialist role. The USSR is the outstanding leader of world Socialism, a fact of which capitalism is well aware. The question of teaching the workers the significance of Socialism takes on double importance now, with the sharp growth of anti-Socialist agita-

tion under the guises of the welfare state and people's capitalism. These are vital new phases in our Socialist work.

Two: *Proletarian Internationalism*: World solidarity of labor is an imperative issue of ever-new importance these days because of: the need for resolute struggle to establish peaceful co-existence of all countries; the rapidly growing strength of world Socialism; the closer knitting together economically of the whole world; the profoundly favorable influence of world Socialism upon the class struggle in the capitalist countries—notably the Negro question and the wage struggle in the United States. A sound defense of the interests of the workers and the American people implies a firm international proletarian policy. More than ever, such a policy must and will involve friendly criticism among the Communist parties and Socialist countries. A special task of our Party is to realize that the intervention in Hungary last November was imperative, in order to beat down the developing counter-revolution in that country basically organized by the agents of Wall Street. The CPUSA is the only Communist Party in the world which does not take this realistic stand. Particularly in this time of aggressive foreign policies by American imperialism, we must also beware the penetration of the Party by bourgeois national influences.

Three: *Democratic Centralism*: We must restore in the Party a clearer concept of the major Leninist policy

of democratic centralism. This policy, containing as it does the two indispensable elements of democracy and centralization, is the only possible policy for a fighting Party. Comrade Gates is fundamentally wrong when he says in his *Political Affairs* article that, "Apparently democratic centralism results in a semi-military type of organization which is clearly not fit for our country in this period." His own proposals would degenerate the Party into a debating society. It is a fact, of course, that, with bureaucratic practices, the Party in the past has abused the basically correct policy of democratic centralism. The Party, therefore, must learn to apply the policy more effectively, and in harmony with American conditions and traditions. We must have a Party in which, not only do the members accept the Party program and pay their dues, but they also carry on Party work. There must be a political line that is obligatory and a sound Party discipline. There must be the broadest possible participation of the membership in policy making at all levels. Dissent must be permitted, but no factionalism. Party papers must be controlled by the Party and required to express the Party line.

Four: *National characteristics*: One of the most harmful results of the development of Revisionism in our Party has been its tendency to break down the Party's struggle against the poisonous bourgeois ideology of American exceptional-

ism. In this general respect also, the Party has made some sectarian errors in the past, above all, in its long inability to work out a more realistic statement of the road to American Socialism. Generally, however, the Party, especially in its vital trade-union work, has had a realistic approach in this broad sphere. Improvements, however, are always in order. To be effective, the Party, basing itself upon the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, must work out its policies more carefully than ever upon the basis of specific and changing American conditions. But in doing this, the Party must not relax in its basically correct ideological struggle against American exceptionalism.

Five: *The United Front*: The Party must re-develop this fundamental and effective Leninist policy, especially in the form of Left-Progressive cooperation in the trade unions. This was the means by which we built the Party and made it a real influence in the labor movement. And despite all the changes and advances in the labor movement, the policy basically still retains its validity. It is sheer nonsense to declare, as the Right is constantly doing, that there are not in the American labor movement the three characteristic ideological currents of conservatives (Right), Progressives (Center) and Left, such as are to be found in the labor movements of every capitalist country in the world. Our job is to find the practical ways to enter into active

collaboration with the Progressives, not to deny that they exist. This is the broad road to trade union unity and to progress generally in the unions.

Obviously, the old Left-Center forms of the TUEL in the 1920's would be totally out of place in the 1950's, and so, also, would be the open warfare against the Right, which prevailed for many years after 1935. But to counteract the holdback pressures of the most conservative group of labor leaders in the world, it is imperatively necessary to activate the combined Progressive forces in the unions, including within the general meaning of this term all those elements, whatever their past attitudes, who are taking a progressive course with regard to the given issue or situation.

It is a gross misrepresentation of Party history by the Right when it states that our Party followed a practice of arbitrarily classifying in pigeonholes given individuals or groups of labor officials. On the contrary, it was always flexibly ready to work with anyone with whom it could. Thus, for example, when, in 1935, Lewis, Dubinsky, Hillman, and others—many of whom we did not previously consider to be either Lefts or Progressives—embarked upon the task of building the CIO, the Communists, quite in line with previous Party policies, gave them immediate and effective cooperation. With the same basic flexibility, the Party, as it had done upon many previous occasions, also became an

active participant, along with the AFL, CIO and pro-Roosevelt forces in general, when the broad democratic front took place in the historic fight against Hitler. Contrary to all this realism, the Party for the past two years has been unable to produce a trade-union resolution or to do any real trade-union work, the reason for this being because, under strong Revisionist pressure, the leadership has been making the double mistake of trying to discard the basic policies of the vanguard role and of specific cooperation with the Progressives.

Six: *The vanguard role*: In the changing world of labor this basic Leninist principle remains vitally necessary for the CPUSA. Our Party is not "a" but "the" vanguard Party. This is because it is the bearer of Marxism-Leninism and it tries to put into effect this basic philosophy and program of the working class. The opportunity to function as vanguard in the labor movement lies open before our Party on every front in the class struggle. This is because of the better insight concerning labor's problems that it acquires from its knowledge of the workers' basic science. But, of course, in the present greatly changed situation, the means and methods for performing the vanguard role, differ widely from those prevailing years ago. Such elementary slogans as "organize the unorganized," "industrial unionism," and "unemployment insurance," which not so long ago were real vanguard slogans in the



United States and served our Party well, will no longer suffice. Our theoretical and practical leadership must be on a much higher plane, because of the great progress made by the unions and other mass organizations in recent years.

But Comrade Bittelman is wrong in assuming and broadly inferring that, on the basis of their undeniable progress, the unions have reached a point of giving "effective political leadership" to the working class, and that, therefore, the Communist Party must develop "a new attitude" toward them—presumably one of bowing to their political leadership. This is essentially denying the leading role of the Party. The "effective political leadership" thesis is contradicted by the many wrong policies and unsolved elementary tasks that are now cluttering up and crippling the trade unions. These include: tailing after the foreign policies of American imperialism; the erstwhile blatant pro-war policies of the decisive ranks of the union leadership; the primitive state of the workers' political organization, with no independence from the bourgeois political leaders; and the continuation of the old Gompers policy of "rewarding your friends," etc.; the present disregard of the heroic struggle of the Negro people in the South against Jim Crow, and the continuing discrimination against Negroes in trade-union leadership; the failure of organized labor to develop a sound economic program of its own; the failure to push the decisively im-

portant Southern organizing drive; the existence of a huge amount of racketeering, corruption, and autocratic controls in the unions; the "trade-union capitalism" policies in handling the huge welfare funds; the fact that large numbers of the leaders are not only "business unionists," whose highest ambition for their organizations is a class collaboration agreement with the bosses, but also that they are actual capitalists themselves; their open defense of the capitalist system and people's capitalism illusions, their extreme opposition to Socialism, etc.

In all these issues, and many more, the trade-union leaders are giving anything but "effective political leadership" to the working class. The need for the type of leadership that will come from effective cooperation between the Left and the Progressive elements is a burning one. Indeed, if our Party stepped to the fore as it did in the historic fight against McCarthyism and the war danger, this was because such action was imperative on its part as a result of the virtual collapse of the trade-union leadership upon these most vital questions. The way is clearly open, therefore, for our Party not simply to content itself with what Comrade Bittelman calls the unions' "effective practical leadership of the working class"; but to help, along with other progressive forces, to give them the real political leadership which their membership and the situation demand.

Seven: *Self-Criticism*: This funda-



mental Leninist policy is always relevant, and is so in the present period, as one of the Party's most powerful instruments. But we must practice it far more correctly than we have done in the past, especially in our recent Party discussion. The gross distortions of cold war Party policy, with the wholesale manufacture of "errors," playdown of Party achievements and ignoring of objective difficulties, which were injected by the Right into an otherwise very valuable Party discussion, did not constitute real self-criticism, but an ideological attack against the integrity and the very life of the Party.

*New methods of work:* It is not enough for the Party to have correct political policies, it must also know how to apply them effectively in the given situation. Therefore, the question of methods of work is always of paramount importance. Flexibility and a progressive spirit in applying policy among the masses are particularly vital at the present time of a rapidly changing economic and political situation, both nationally and internationally. The search for ever-more effective methods of work is of decisive importance. The fate of the CPUSA will depend in a basic measure upon the extent to which we realize and adapt ourselves to this fundamental need.

The foregoing general analysis evaluates the concrete Marxist-Leninist policies with which the Communist Party, through the years, was built and developed into a real force in the labor movement. It shows also the extent to which these fruitful policies are valid for the present situation. It traces the causes for the Party crisis; it indicates the chief means by which this crisis may be overcome, and also how the Party can regain its legality, rebuild its strength, and again become a real influence in the class struggle. The needful curative tasks may be summed up under three general heads: a) to bring about the earliest and most intensive cultivation of our mass work upon all fronts; b) to liquidate the continuing theoretical confusion in the Party, not only our traditional sectarianism and dogmatism, but also the Revisionism which has almost wrecked the Party, and c) to develop an energetic campaign of Party rebuilding (especially among the ex-members), not upon the basis that we are building the Party upon a temporary scale—until we can get a "better" organization—but with the understanding that we are constructing the Party that will be the vanguard in all the stages of the workers' struggle, including the eventual building of Socialism.