

CONCLUDING REMARKS AT THE CONVENTION

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

COMRADES:

As our Convention comes to a close, it seems to me that our judgment of it must be that it is the best Convention in the history of our Party. It is a sure sign that our Party is growing and is forging ahead.

There are a number of especially high points in the Convention that should be signalized.

HIGH POINTS

First, and most important of all, is the high political level of the Convention. This was shown by our Draft Resolution, by Comrade Dennis' splendid report, by the election platform, and by the other fine reports, the Panel discussions, and the delegates' speeches. The work of the Convention can be summed up, in the spirit of Communist modesty, by the generalization that, in the main, our Party understands the basic problems that confront the American people, and that we have the practical policies and the determination to meet these problems. Hence, if we put into life the various documents, reports, and resolutions we have adopted, our Party can undoubtedly play a very important role in the coming period and should ex-

perience a real growth in numbers and mass influence.

A second high point of the Convention is the strong unity that our Party has displayed. So far as our political deliberations are concerned—and I think everybody will agree that we have had a free political discussion and have exercised Communist democracy in this Convention—the sum and substance of the line expressed in our various speeches, documents, etc., is a unified one. There has been no factional disunity to mar our political solidarity. This political and organizational unity is no small achievement, comrades. It is doubly important because our Party is now under such fierce attack. All the ideological forces of American imperialism, together with much of its repressive powers, are directed against us in a head-on assault. Reaction is attempting to confuse our Party, to scatter its forces, to drive it underground. Besides this direct attack from the capitalists, we have been experiencing attacks from the Right-opportunist Browderite grouplet and from various "Leftist" renegades. But our Party has withstood all these assaults, has shunted them off, has de-

feated them, has worked out its line unitedly, and here we are in our Convention, a unified Communist Party, courageously facing up to the hard tasks that stand ahead of us. No wonder that our Convention has been so spirited and enthusiastic!

A third marked feature of our Convention is the fine fighting spirit it has evidenced. This is characteristic of the spirit of our Party generally. Obviously, our Party is not terrified by the fierce attacks that are being directed against us by the government, by the capitalists, and by their labor leader stooges. So far as I know, throughout American history no political party has ever been subjected to such ferocious attacks as our Party has been experiencing since the end of the war. But the response of our Party to these attacks—and that has been well emphasized here in our Convention—has been, and is, a rising, fighting spirit. Our Party knows that it is fighting on the side of progress, with the democratic and socialist forces here and of the world that are on the way to victory.

It is not untimely to compare the present splendid fighting mood of our Party with the dull spirit that prevailed in the Party during the Browder regime. At that time, undoubtedly, our Party had become afflicted with a stodginess, a lackadaisical spirit, and even a petty-bourgeois respectability. But this we are sloughing off in the course of the sharpening class struggle. That our Party is showing itself to be a splen-

did fighting organization was well exemplified in the recent fight against the Mundt Bill. In fact, comrades, the very holding of this Convention is a testimonial to our Party's fighting spirit and to the successful struggle carried on by our Party against attempts to illegalize it.

One of the things that struck me during the Convention was that when Nick Migas rose to speak he was greeted with a spontaneous burst of applause from all sides. This was because Nick, with his bold stand in the face of the goon squads at the steel workers' convention, symbolized the fighting spirit of our Party. The indomitable spirit of Nick Migas is the kind we have to cultivate throughout our Party. It is the kind of Communist spirit that will carry our Party far.

Together with the high political level, the unity, and the fighting spirit of the Convention, another thing struck me in listening to the discussions and reports. This was the intense Party consciousness exhibited by practically everybody. A deep conception of the vanguard role of our Party has run all through the Convention proceedings. There has been a keen realization that our Party is a decisive factor in the struggle of the workers and the nation and that without a strong Party we can do nothing. Since this is our first Convention since 1945, it is well, perhaps, to contrast this fine Party spirit with the liquidationist attitude that prevailed in the Browder years. In this Convention we are consciously

and determinedly studying how we can strengthen the Party and its political role, whereas in those years the conception, cultivated by Browder, was that our Party was an obstacle in the way of the progress of the American working class and had to be dissolved. This new Party consciousness of ours, this more acute realization of the tremendous vanguard role of our Party, is a mark of the progress that we have made during the past three years.

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When I say that this Convention has exhibited all these very fine qualities, I do not mean that we should overlook certain weaknesses that were present in our deliberations. That would be a great mistake on our part.

I would say that the main weakness displayed by the Convention was that there was not enough discussion of the war danger and the struggle for peace. We seemed to take this problem for granted. This was a very serious shortcoming. We have to realize that the central task of our Party in the present great struggle is precisely to fight against the war danger. In this general respect we must not put the question of fascism in such a way as to make the possibility of war seem to be dependent upon the establishment of fascism in this country. The reality is that there is a grave danger of war right now, even under the present political regime. We have to focus our main attention upon the

central question of the war danger. Everything else is secondary, all other issues are subordinate, to the fight for peace.

Another weakness that, it seemed to me, stood out in the Convention, was the inadequate treatment given to the question of the veterans. We all know the tremendous role that the veterans are now playing in the national political life, and we also realize that they are going to play a greatly increased role as the years go by. Nevertheless, I do not think we have paid enough attention to the veterans' problems. This weakness must be corrected in our future work.

A further question which received inadequate attention in the Convention, it appears to me, was the farm question. This is a chronic weakness of our Party of late years, which shows itself in practically every district. It is a very costly shortcoming on our part. There may be some comrades who feel that this weakness is unavoidable, like the sun coming up or the rain falling; but this is not so. The time was, not so many years ago, when our Party was strong among the farmers, particularly in the Middle West. Ignoring the farmers cannot be justified on the basis that these people represent an impregnable force whom we cannot influence. We must reach them, comrades, and in a much more energetic spirit than we have indicated in our Convention here.

Another thing that struck me in our Convention was the unsatisfac-

tory way the *Daily Worker* was handled. This neglect I thought rather shocking. The *Daily Worker* and the *Worker* cannot live by themselves. They cannot just be taken for granted. The building of our press now is of overwhelming importance, and this question should have run through the whole Convention and been part of its very fiber, which it certainly was not.

One could single out many other weaknesses. After all, we are confronted by a world of problems, and it is not surprising to find that we have neglected to put sufficient stress upon some of them. In spite of all its weaknesses, however, the Convention unquestionably was, as I said at the outset, a very fine one, in my opinion the best that our Party has ever held.

A SOUND POLITICAL LINE

During the course of the discussions, the various reports, etc., it has stood out unmistakably that our Party has a sound political line. At this Convention we have not changed our basic line; what we have done has been to sharpen it up, and to discuss it in all its implications. We have been generally examining the problems of applying a fundamentally correct line. More than this, our Party has had, and the discussion and the documents go to show it, a correct line since our 1945 Emergency Convention. That convention, as you will recall, took place after the publication of the Duclos article. What Duclos did in his famous ar-

ticle was to indicate and characterize primarily two major aspects of Browder's revisionism, namely, his liquidation of the Party and his perspective of class collaboration in the postwar period. To these basic points in the Duclos article our 1945 convention made certain very important additions. The 1945 convention also made an analysis of American imperialism and showed clearly that it was conducting a drive for the domination of the world. The convention indicated further that growing out of this drive was a fresh danger of war and of fascism.

By indicating the world drive of American imperialism, with its implications of fascism and war, as we did very definitely and clearly in our 1945 resolution, it appears to me that we did some international pioneering. In fact, our Party was among the first, if not the very first Party, to speak out clearly upon the world drive of American imperialism and its accompanying dangers. Early in 1947 I attended the London Conference of the Communist Parties of the British Empire, as well as the Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain. At these gatherings, I listened to the reports of delegates from thirty-four Communist parties and very few of them indicated any sense of real danger of war and fascism from American imperialism. It was only later, especially after the announcement of the Truman Doctrine regarding Greece, that these parties, which had undoubtedly previously underestimated the role

of American imperialism, brought themselves up to date on this vital question.

It was because our Party, in its 1945 convention, thus established a fundamentally correct analysis of the role of American imperialism, with the danger of war and fascism implicit in it, in addition to re-establishing again our Party as a Party and giving it a class struggle program, that we were able, during these past three years, to conduct a basically correct political struggle. This explains why we were able so quickly to recognize where the Truman Administration was going with its violation of the Roosevelt policies. It was the underlying reason, too, why we were able clearly, promptly, and correctly to analyze the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, and to understand the significance of the growth of the third-party movement. Our sound analysis in 1945 of the predatory role of American imperialism was the key to all our work since then and it still remains the basis of our general political line.

Utterly false is the story that the Darcy and other "Leftist" renegade groups have been circulating to the effect that in our 1945 Emergency Convention we arrived at a Centrist solution of the crisis of our Party regarding Browder's revisionism. Likewise false is the allegation of Browder himself that we worked out a sectarian solution of that crisis. On the contrary, we achieved a basically sound Communist solution to the crisis of revisionism that we faced

at that convention, or rather just before it, in 1945. The events since then have proved the correctness of the course we then took. It is not true, as these renegades say, that the decisions of the Nine-Party Conference in Poland last September caused us fundamentally to change our Party line. Quite the reverse, the decisions arrived at by the Nine-Party Conference affirmed the correctness of our line, especially on the all-important question of the role of American imperialism and the danger of war and fascism connected with it. Of course, there was much for us to learn from the Nine-Party Conference. I may add that we would have learned these lessons faster had we not taken a rather self-complacent attitude toward the conference precisely because we saw that our general line agreed with that of the conference.

The weaknesses our Party has shown in its work in the past three years have therefore been, as Comrade Dennis pointed out in his report, failures and shortcomings in carrying out a fundamentally correct line. Too often we did not draw all the implications of that line, nor did we always apply it energetically and correctly. The errors that we committed were of both a Right-opportunist and a Left-sectarian character. During these three years our Party has had to conduct a fight on two fronts. That we have had Leftist moods in the Party to combat has been made all too evident by the long struggle that had to be con-

ducted in numerous districts, New York, California, and elsewhere, against the Leftist renegade group-lets that have cropped up. Nevertheless, it seems to me that in spite of Leftist-sectarian weaknesses of this past period, the main weaknesses and mistakes that we had to contend with were of a Right-opportunist character.

[At this point Comrade Foster continued with a detailed analysis of numerous Right and Leftist-sectarian errors made by the Party during the past three years, particularly in the field of trade-union work. Some of the more important of these shortcomings may be briefly summarized as follows:

[Right-opportunist tendencies to maintain the formerly correct Left-Center combination in the C.I.O. after it had lost its political validity, with the result that such errors were made as the adoption of the joint resolution which lent itself to distortion by Phil Murray as alleged support of the Marshall Plan, at the Boston, 1947, Convention of the C.I.O. and also the resolution adopted that same year in the New York State C.I.O. Industrial Council, for restricting the exercise of the veto in the U.N.

[Failure over a long period of the Left and progressive forces in the C.I.O. to differentiate their progressive line from the increasingly reactionary, pro-war line of the Murray forces, with the result that the Lefts and progressives failed to make the masses realize their constructive contributions to C.I.O. policy and also

had to assume a measure of undue responsibility for the increasingly jingoistic policies of the C.I.O. leadership.

[Sectarian tendencies to accept the isolation that the capitalists and their labor leader henchmen are trying to force upon us, among others, by inadequate resistance to Murray's attempt to cultivate raids and splits in C.I.O. unions.

[Inadequate co-operation among the Left-led unions against the concerted drive against them by the Right-wing forces in the C.I.O. and the employers.

[Inadequate appreciation of the tremendous political significance to the American people of the new third-party movement and a failure to mobilize all possible forces in the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. to give it maximum trade-union support.

[Failure of the Left forces in the National Maritime Union to assert a sufficiently aggressive policy against the junta of Curran and renegades from Communism, when the Lefts had a majority in the National Council.

[Long-continued sectarian support of the National Negro Congress, which tended seriously to isolate some of our leading forces from important mass movements of the Negro people.]

CRITICISM AND SELF-CRITICISM

Now, I would like to say a few words about the question of self-criticism. As we have learned from

Lenin and verified by our own practical experience, the question of self-criticism is of the most vital importance. Without self-criticism our Party would stagnate. It is my opinion that in this Convention we have had much very valuable and very frank self-criticism. This is one of the healthy signs in the Party's development. During the Browder regime, as we all know to our cost, self-criticism was reduced practically to zero in our Party.

Let us remember, however, that self-criticism is a kind of two-edged sword. It is a sharp Leninist weapon that must be used skillfully. We have to understand what we mean by self-criticism. There are some comrades in the Party who seem to think that self-criticism simply means getting up and intemperately denouncing the Party for errors, or imaginary errors, that have been made.

Such reckless criticism is both wrong and injurious. When we embark upon an evaluation of the Party's work in any given situation we have to bear in mind the welfare of our Party and speak in a responsible way. We must speak, not only in a responsible way, but in a political way, as well. In criticizing the political line, or the work of the Party, therefore, we have to take into consideration several major propositions. We must determine, first the character of the objective situation in which the given struggle or movement takes place; secondly, what are the available forces of the Party; and, thirdly, what are the accomplish-

ments, if any, of the Party in the given situation. After we have given consideration to these facts, we shall be in a position correctly to evaluate the mistakes and failures of the Party. We must not simply single out the mistakes that have been made and fire into the Party and its leadership, without regard to other factors, as some comrades have fallen into the habit of doing in recent years.

It is fundamentally necessary to criticize the mistakes and failures of the Party, and the more incisive the criticism the better the results for the Party. But in making such criticism, one cannot ignore the successes of the Party. Those comrades who indulge in such criticism should realize its harmful effect on the workers. For what working class will ever accept as its leader a Party that is given the appearance of only making mistakes? And, then, have we not many outstanding achievements to our credit?

It appears to me, for example, that our anti-war agitation, our fight against American imperialism over the past three years, is of national and international importance. In this respect, our Party has undoubtedly exerted an influence nationally on the thinking of the American people, and has certainly made large sections of them realize the deadly significance of American imperialist policy. Or, take the Marcantonio election fight of a couple of years ago here in New York. I dare say that never in the history of the United States was

such a hard fight waged against a progressive Congressman by the combined forces of reaction as the battle against Marcantonio to prevent his re-election, and we can be proud of our part in his great victory. Likewise, we played an honorable role in the recent election of Congressman Isacson on the A.L.P. ticket. This was another major people's victory, one which had not only national, but worldwide repercussions. We also had a decisive part in saving the Ingrams from the executioner. And we all know the big and successful fight our Party, along with other progressives, put up against the infamous Mundt police state bill. Nor have we been without very considerable influence in the workers' hard fight for higher wages and the general struggle against the high cost of living.

Another outstanding achievement of the democratic forces in which our Party actively participated, was the securing of half a million signatures in California to put the new party on the ballot. Comrades, that was a major achievement of the people. Reactionaries and timid liberals had argued for many years that it was impossible to get a third party on the ballot, and they especially pointed to California to prove that it could not be done. You know that a new party has to have 375,000 signatures to get on the ballot in that state, a most difficult requirement indeed. But the Left and progressive forces, including our Party, went out and did get those signa-

tures, to the amazement of the whole country.

Therefore, when we sum up the work of our Party we cannot ignore all these things. We have to give the Party credit for its achievements, such as they are, and, on the basis of these, make our frank criticisms of the shortcomings of the Party.

We also must learn to evaluate the objective situation within which the Party is working. Many comrades forget to do this in making their criticisms. This is wrong. While we must not seek to excuse ourselves for the setbacks that we have suffered recently in the trade unions on the ground of the difficult objective situation, nevertheless we cannot ignore the fundamental importance of this factor. It is no sign of a good Marxist to push aside consideration of the objective situation and blame everything on the Party when there is a lack of success. For a Marxist the starting point is precisely an evaluation of the objective situation. If, in a given situation, the objective conditions are difficult and worsening and we pay no attention to them, they can lead to an adventurist policy, to our Party separating itself from the masses, to our suffering serious defeats. On the other hand, if there is an improving objective situation and we fail to evaluate it correctly, our Party, as a result, is bound to tail along after the masses, unable to play a constructive role in the developing struggles.

My opinion is that the setbacks that Left-wingers and progressives

have suffered in the trade unions, especially in the U.A.W. and the N.M.U., to a very considerable extent resulted from effects of the drive of American imperialism. This drive has corrupted large sections of the trade-union leadership, brought about the split between the Center and Left forces, and, undoubtedly, has poisoned the minds of many workers with imperialist illusions. We would simply be blind to fail to take these things into consideration. Whether these particular defeats could have been completely avoided is problematical. However, one thing is clear, that with improved work, the Left and other progressives could have made a far better showing than they did. The lesson that has to be drawn from this situation, particularly in the face of the big drive of American imperialism, is that the Left must improve its work, sharpen up its activities in every direction, and practice a higher level of work in general.

THE POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Now, a few words as to the general political perspective that is facing our Party.

This perspective unquestionably points toward sharpened struggle on every front. The general crisis of capitalism is deepening, the world capitalist system is in a very shaky condition and is highly unstable; the relations between the capitalist world and the socialist world, as we know, are in a very tense condition. Conse-

quently, there will be no stabilization following this war, not even a temporary stabilization. We face the perspective of an acute war danger and the practical certainty in the near future of an American economic crisis that will shake the capitalist world. The implication of this is that there will be a sharpening mass struggle all along the line. The workers will fight; the people will fight. Our Party must realize this fact and be ready for these struggles. The guiding principle for our Party, it seems to me, in the perspective of sharpening class struggle that stands before us, was the one laid down at the Nine-Party Conference, namely, that the greatest mistake we could make would be to overestimate the forces of the enemy and to underestimate our own.

We in the United States face the most powerful capitalist class in the world, a capitalist class that is ruthlessly on the offensive in an insane drive to conquer the world. Our Party is relatively weak as compared with the great mass Communist parties of Europe; but we must realize, as I have indicated earlier, that in the stormy period ahead of us the masses will fight militantly and on a large scale, and we can play an important role in that fight. We must not concede victory on any front to the capitalists.

War is not inevitable! The peace-loving people of this country can defeat the warmongers, and it is the supreme task of our Party to help mobilize the masses for this purpose.

Under no circumstances, neither openly nor by subtle implication, should we condone any idea that war must break out. That great issue remains to be settled, and our Party should go down the line fighting to help preserve world peace.

Fascism also is not inevitable! Again, we must fight against all fatalistic ideas or implications that fascism cannot be avoided. Despite all the power of American imperialism and all its reactionary domestic trends, the people have the power to defeat fascism. It is by no means a settled issue. The masses have yet to be heard from on this question, and our Party must fight against fascism in a resolute spirit of confidence.

The outlawing of our Party is also not inevitable! The big reactionaries want to outlaw our Party. They know the vanguard of the proletariat when they meet up with it, even if many so-called labor leaders don't. There must be no fatalism about the outlawing of our Party. We don't concede anything on this question either. The reactionaries have been trying hard for two years to illegalize our Party, but it's not going to be a simple task for them, as they have already learned. The people licked the Schwellenbach proposal to drive our Party underground, and they also licked the Mundt police state bill, which had the same objective. The American people are more than suspicious about proposals to outlaw our Party. They saw what happened to democracy after Hitler outlawed

the Communist Party of Germany. This is why the proponents of the Mundt Bill had to deny publicly that its purpose was to drive our Party underground. So let us tolerate in our midst no negative attitude toward the fight for the legality of our Party. This issue is not settled, and before the reactionaries get done, they will know they have had a real fight on the question of outlawing our Party.

The conviction of our arrested leaders is likewise not inevitable! We know we have to contend with a frame-up by the Government. Every contemptible liar and provocateur will be used against us. All Communists understand that. Nevertheless, we are not accepting the proposition that we are going to be jailed. We will fight up one side of the street and down the other against this frame-up. Under no circumstances should we allow any defeatism to develop on this issue. We will arouse the masses against this frame-up, and we will go in and fight for victory in court. There are tremendous powers arrayed against us—the Government, the press, the trade-union bureaucratic leadership, the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, the courts, and all the rest of the machinery of capitalism. But we have one great force on our side—the great masses of American people, with their love of freedom and fair play. In this case, we will give the Red-baiters and warmongers a fight that they didn't expect. Let our Party prepare resolutely for this fight.

FOR A FIGHTING COMMUNIST PARTY

America needs a fighting Communist Party. That is the spirit with which we want to infuse our Party, and that is the spirit shown by this Convention. In the stormy period ahead of us our Party will have to conduct, as Comrade Dennis said, a war on two fronts against weaknesses and deviations from our correct political line. There must be no acceptance on our part of Leftist, isolation moods. We must not Red-bait ourselves; we must not engage in desperation tactics or in short-cut policies that the masses will not support. We must boldly establish our contacts with the people's coalition forces and refuse to be forced into isolation. While we must stand guard against any Leftist moods, nevertheless, in the immediate future, I am sure, the main danger we shall confront will be the Right-opportunist danger. At bottom this danger is the tendency to overestimate the power of American imperialism and an effort to try to accommodate to it, resulting in surrender moods and in defeatist tactics.

Especially, under the head of the Right danger, we must be on guard against any tendencies to liquidate our Party during the developing election struggle. Don't think this is a small danger! We could tend to liquidate our own Party by failing to build it during the coming months and by neglecting to make the vanguard role of our Party stand out

clearly, so that the workers in general and our members in particular can understand why there must be a Communist Party. Consequently, all through the great election struggle that we are entering we must keep sharply in mind the necessity of building our own Party and of developing its line. And especially, in this respect, as Comrade Dennis in his report, as our Platform, and the various other Convention documents and speeches emphasize, we must take up the question of socialism in a new way. We must make a truly powerful argument for socialism and demonstrate clearly how it would improve the living conditions and freedom of the American people.

OUR MASS WORK

I would like to say a few words on three general points regarding our mass work.

First, on the question of the fight on the ideological front. Obviously, as has been pointed out, we confront a very complicated ideological struggle. Decaying capitalism is making a desperate effort to retain its hold upon the people's minds. One of the main tasks we have in improving our activity on the ideological front is to improve our Marxist theoretical work. As capitalism goes into decay it throws up a host of theoretical problems. Very many of them our Party has tackled either not at all or only sketchily, with the result, naturally, that our policy suffers. It is significant that all over the world Communist parties are displaying

a new intensity in engaging themselves in pioneer theoretical work. We must keep in step with this vital trend.

One of the things we have done lately in this general respect has been to set up a theoretical commission in the Party. This is the first time in the history of our Party that we have had such a commission. This commission developed out of the studies of Keynesism we have been carrying on for the past months. The commission has organized several sub-commissions, with the object of clearing up various specific theoretical problems.

One of these sub-commissions has the job of preparing an outline history of our Party. We hope to have it ready by next year, in time for our 30th Anniversary. Comrade Bittelman is the head of the sub-commission. We consider this work, of course, to be deeply theoretical as well as very practical. It is high time that we had an outline of our Party's history, so that our members may know something about its experiences and struggle.

I shall mention only one more of our theoretical sub-commissions. This is the commission on women's work. Undoubtedly, as regards theory, our Party is weak on this question. It is a very complex matter and for us presents many unsolved problems. The sub-commission is going to tackle some of them, especially the illusions of male superiority. Undoubtedly our Party, in spite of our position for full equality of women

with men in every field of activity, is afflicted with false and harmful concepts. Of course, the general population is literally saturated with them. The commission on women's work will try to throw some light on this important question, and the men in our Party are going to have a going-over on this matter in the near future.

In our Party we have comrades who are well developed theoretically: the trouble is, however, that our theoretical work has never been organized. On theoretical questions we have worked planlessly, on a hit or miss basis. One of the characteristics of the Browder regime was the tendency to squelch our budding theoreticians and arrogantly to assume that all Marxist expression was centered in one person, with very sad consequences. But now the Party is systematically cultivating its Marxist forces. This is a most important step forward. Every district should pay attention to this development and act accordingly. I would be lax in these remarks if I did not say a word of congratulation to the California district, which has done outstanding work in this respect, especially Celeste Strack and the comrades associated with her.

The second point on our mass work that I want to speak on is in connection with the coming trials of our indicted leaders. We must resolve to develop these trials into a great political-ideological struggle. As Comrade Dennis said, we have got to put capitalism on the defen-

sive. The great model as to how we must fight, of course, is the historic fight made by Comrade Dimitrov against the fascists in the Reichstag fire trial.

In the courtroom we must shatter the lie that our Party advocates force and violence; we must shatter the charges of espionage made against us; we must shatter the slanders that we are foreign agents. We must expose completely American imperialism and its reactionary program. We must make clear the role of the Communist Party as the best defender of the interests of the American people and the working class. We must reveal the basis for socialism in American conditions. In and out of the courtroom, in our publicity and in our rallies, we must give the American people the best educational course in Communism they have ever had. I have no doubt that our comrades on trial can lick the cleverest ideologists of American capitalism.

But, comrades, this trial must not be considered as simply the fight of the twelve defendants. It must be taken by the Party to the masses of the American people. We must understand it as a great mass struggle. The whole American people must be told what is going on and what is being said in that courtroom. They must be shown the tremendous political danger represented by the outlawing of the Communist Party. They must be organized to support our fight. And it seems to me that while this trial is going on, we ought to add a few thousand members to

our Party. I cannot conceive of any more fitting time to do it.

Now, the third and last question of mass work that I want to say a few words on, is that of the elections. Comrade Dennis correctly said, in his general report, that we must make this election fight the biggest election struggle in the history of our Party. Everything that we are doing—the fight against war, the fight against fascism, the fight for the rights of the Negro people, the fight against the high cost of living—all these issues must be centered in this election struggle. We must concentrate everything we have in this big fight. Comrades, despite the relatively small size of our Party, we can be a vital force in this election. We must utilize every avenue of expression open to us and organize our forces as they have never been organized before. The correctness of our cause must lend power and confidence to our Party.

The line of our Party is clear for this vital election struggle. We can do much to awaken the masses increasingly to the dangers of war and fascism as this political struggle sharpens. We must not miss the great opportunity that this election gives us. Above all, comrades, as we go into the struggle we must remember to build our Party. We do not want a Party of just a few handfuls of militants. We want a strong mass Party. We must enlist the thousands of active, fighting workers who are now on the fringes of our Party. We must make the line of the

Party stand out in the election. In our Election Platform we have a fine document around which to conduct our struggle. So, comrades, let us go into this election with a fighting spirit and make it truly, as Comrade Dennis said, the biggest election fight in our history.

CONCLUSION

Now just a few words in conclusion. It has been wisely said that the Communist Party of the United States is one of the few Communist Parties that will be called upon to play a decisive role in the development of the world revolutionary movement. This is profoundly true. The capitalists understand this fact very well. That is the secret of their sharpening attacks upon our Party. And not only do the capitalists un-

derstand it, but so do the reactionary trade-union leaders and other capitalist flunkies. That is why they are fighting us so hard. But what is even more important, the Communist parties of other countries understand the vital role that our Party has to play. This is the significance of the greetings that have been pouring into this Convention from Communist parties all over the world. So, comrades, let us, too, be fully conscious of the vital importance of our Party, situated as it is here in the heart of American imperialism, the center of world reaction.

Our Party line is correct, we have a good fighting spirit, we stand solidly united, and we can make our forces count. In this sense let us, therefore, conclude our Convention and go forth into the historically important struggles that confront us.