

The

COMMUNIST

PARTY

and *You*

By BETTY GANNETT



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and YOU

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COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE U. S. A.

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I

WELCOME INTO THE COMMUNIST FAMILY

To you, one of the many thousands of new members of our great Communist family, we extend the warm handclasp of comradeship. You have joined our Party to help work for an America that will be the best place in the world to live—an America free from exploitation and oppression, discrimination and insecurity, greed and corruption. You have joined not a small sect, but a glorious movement which brings together the most advanced members of the working class and the nation who are determined to realize the age-long aspirations of man for freedom.



WILLIAM Z. FOSTER
National Chairman, C.P., U.S.A.

In the ranks of our Party you will find a cross-section of the American working people. Miners from the pits. Steel workers who fire the open hearths and forge the steel. Seafaring men whose courage brings American ships to all parts of the world. Auto workers, electricians, radio men, railroad and packing-house workers, and many others coming from all industries—large and small—who make American industry the most productive in the world.

Most of the members of the Communist Party are workers. This is as it should be. For the working class is the most consistently progressive force in capitalist America, as it is in the entire world. It is the class into whose hands history has placed the great task of freeing humanity from all oppression.

In our Party you will also find farmers who till the soil. You will find teachers and students, writers and musicians, technicians and office workers—men and women of all walks of life, with one all-embracing objective—to create the conditions that will ensure a life of decency and well-being for all who labor by hand and brain.

In our Party you will find represented all nationalities and creeds—Negro and white, Jew and gentile, foreign born and native—a great sweeping cross-section of America, all bound together by a common goal and by a common love for our land and its rich revolutionary traditions.

These are men and women like yourself. These are not people who merely live for themselves alone, unconcerned with the needs of their fellow men. These are men and women, warm of heart, sure of step, clear of mind, with an abiding faith in the great creative strength of our working class and people, unstinting and selfless in their devotion to the cause of labor and human progress. These are working-class fighters, inspired by a great and lofty goal—the liberation of our nation from the domination and control of the ruthless men of the trusts in whose hands is now concentrated the vast resources and wealth of our nation. These are people dedicated to the achievement of socialism.

You will feel at home in our Party.

You Came to the Party Naturally

It is not by chance that you joined our Party at this precise moment in history. This past year has been a year of great awakening. Whether you fought on one of the many battle-fronts, or produced the sinews of war in one of the giant munitions plants, or participated actively in war work in your community, you gave everything you had to win the war against the fascist menace. You hoped that, with the defeat of fascism, somehow things would also change for you and yours.

But your hopes were betrayed. No sooner had the guns been stilled and the V-J Day celebrations ended, than talk of another war filled the air. In the newspapers and via the radio you

were bombarded with propaganda about the need to "get tough" with our staunchest ally—the Soviet Union. You saw the big fellows, who made billions out of the war, go on a rampage against the little guys—to destroy all the gains of labor, reduce take-home pay, skyrocket prices beyond our reach, lengthen working hours, hold up production, and create mass unemployment. You saw President Truman, who pledged to follow in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's footsteps, betray every single democratic policy FDR had fought for at home and abroad. You witnessed the shameful spectacle of the Congressional bloc of Republicans and Southern poll-tax Democrats wiping out one progressive measure after another, and tightening the grip of reaction on our country.



EUGENE DENNIS
General Secretary, C.P., U.S.A.

You decided not to take this lying down, and to do something about it. Perhaps you were one of the many who struck to secure higher wages, went on delegations to maintain price control, or participated in actions to stop the intimidation of the Negro people. Perhaps you gathered in conference to plan the fight for housing and other vital needs of the veterans, or to prepare for the defeat of reactionary, pro-fascist candidates in the coming elections. Perhaps you spoke out for the withdrawal of American troops from China, for a complete break with Franco Spain, or for genuine Anglo-Soviet-American collaboration to maintain the peace of the world.

You may have participated in any one of these drives. But you recognized that was not enough. More had to be done.

You turned to our Communist Party. You joined the Communist Party.

You were right. You have taken an important step, one you will never regret.

A Party with Advanced Ideas

Our Communist Party is a special kind of organization. It determines all its actions and policies by the needs and interests of the working class, the real interests of our nation. It bases all its actions and policies on the science of Socialism, developed and elaborated by the greatest social scientists and working class leaders in history—Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V. I. Lenin and Joseph Stalin.

It is our Communist science, known as Marxism-Leninism, which reveals the economic foundations upon which modern society develops, how the capitalist class amasses fabulous wealth from exploitation of the labor of the working class, until today a few billionaires control the lives and destinies of tens of millions. It explains why booms and busts, unemployment, poverty and misery cannot be done away with so long as capitalism continues to exist. It shows how modern monopoly capitalism—imperialism—brings on wars for world control. It enables us to understand the barbarous savagery of the most reactionary imperialist monopolies against the people, which we know as fascism.

Marxism-Leninism makes clear why the interests of the capitalist class directly conflict with the interests of the working class; and why these conflicting interests take the form of bitter class struggle which can not cease so long as a handful of capitalists continue to appropriate for themselves the wealth created by the labor of millions. But it makes clear more than that. It reveals that capitalism itself creates the conditions which make possible and necessary the development of a society free from the exploitation of man by man. It shows why the modern working class is impelled by the very condition of its existence to lead all the oppressed toward this new socialist reorganization of society.

It is a fact that Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the great bourgeois liberal leader, warned the people against the economic royalists when he said:

"A small group had concentrated into their own hands an almost complete control over other people's property, other people's money, other people's labor—other people's lives. For too many of us life was no longer free; liberty no longer real; men could no longer follow the pursuit of happiness.

"It was natural . . . that the privileged princes of these new economic dynasties, thirsting for power, reached out for Government itself."

We Communists pointed out—long before Roosevelt and more basically and consistently—how the trusts dominate the life and destiny of our people, controlling not only our vast economic wealth, but the government itself. We never cease to point out that the exploitation of the immense majority of Americans by the financial overlords, the Morgans, Rockefellers, du Ponts, Mellons, Fords and others—the notorious 60 Ruling Families of America—stands in the way of the happiness, security, and freedom of our people, and the greatness of our nation.

A Party for Socialism

We know that only under socialism—when the mines, mills, factories, banks, railroads, and land are no longer the private property of the few, but the property of all the people, owned and operated in common—will the people enjoy true well-being and prosperity. Our immense productive powers, freed from the grip of the monopolies, will then yield goods in great abundance to satisfy the wants of everybody. Our country will then be rid for all time of the scourge of war, insecurity, oppression. The establishment in our country of a workers' state, supported by all the toiling people, would guarantee and safeguard, by the supreme law of the land, the fullest liberty, security and cultural development of the people. It would do away with the privileges and power now enjoyed by the few to exploit the many.

Despite the arrogance and the present seeming strength of

the American economic royalists, they can and will be defeated in their present reactionary offensive against the people. And, despite their boasted power, we Communists have unshakeable confidence in the eventual victory of the cause of socialism. We know our path is correct. It is in line with the forward march of history, of the advance of all progressive mankind on the road to socialism. It is based on scientific knowledge, on the study of the actual laws of development of present-day society. As Frederick Engels said long ago in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*:

"The possibility of securing for every member of society, by means of socialized production, an existence not only fully sufficient materially, and becoming day by day more full, but an existence guaranteeing to all the free development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties—this possibility is now for the first time here, but it is here."

The strength of our Communist Party thus lies not only in its firm working-class base, but in its Marxist-Leninist science.

It is our Marxist knowledge that enables us to understand events which to others seem obscure and bewildering, and to foresee events which others never can. That is why Communists have advanced views on all problems and issues as they arise, knowing at each particular moment not only what needs to be done to help secure immediate improvements in the conditions of the people, but also what will best serve the interests of the working class in the long run.

A Party that Called the Turn

You know from your own experience that Communists not only know how to fight, but when to fight. You have seen the tireless energy and unyielding courage of Communists in many struggles. You know that Communists do not shirk any task which advances the interests of the working class, the Negro people and our people as a whole. The tireless energy and self-sacrificing activities of the Communists stem from their socialist convictions. It is this which enables us to plan—with boldness and initiative, with foresight and understanding—how to meet every new attack upon labor and the people. See for yourself.

Who warned the working class that the reactionary circles of American Big Business, emerging from the war unscathed and greatly strengthened, had embarked on the path of imperialist expansion to establish their unchallenged sway over the rest of the world, endangering the peace of the world and the interests of our nation?

Who explained the motives behind the "get tough with Russia" policy, the meaning of the frenzied hysteria unleashed against a great and courageous ally, whose friendship and collaboration is indispensable to the peace of the world?

Who explained the causes underlying the sabotage of the agreements to denazify Germany and democratize Japan, the aggressive intervention in China which is fanning the flames of civil war in that country, and the open interference in the internal affairs of the European democracies?

Who was the first to expose the abandonment of the Roosevelt domestic and foreign program by the Truman Administration, which is increasingly carrying out the program of the



Demonstrating before the German Consulate in defense of the Spanish people.

reactionary men of the trusts, and their Hoover-Taft-Vandenburg political spokesmen?

Who alerted the working class to the anti-labor drive of Big Business, aimed to wipe out the gains of labor, destroy and hamstring the labor movement, split the alliance of the working class and the Negro people, and isolate the veterans from labor?

Who emphasized the need for unity—for a unified strategy, for the maximum unity of all sections of labor in the wage and strike movement, and for the unity of Negro and white, of labor and the veterans—to defeat the employers' reactionary offensive?

Who denounced the murderous terror against the Negro people, the shameful system of Jim Crow oppression and discrimination, and fights resolutely for unity of Negro and white to secure complete equality for the Negro people, and against every expression of white supremacy, anti-Semitism and oppression of all national minorities?

Who showed the working class that it cannot rely on the Truman Administration, but must develop its own independent political activity, uniting with all other anti-fascist and progressive forces to create an independent powerful anti-monopoly, anti-fascist people's party to drive back rising native fascism? Who but the Communist Party?

A Party Our Nation Can't Do Without

Of course, important sections of the labor movement fight on many of these issues, and do not limit themselves to economic questions alone. Of course, there are many people and many organizations that fight on one or another of these issues. But only our Party fights on all fronts. Only the Communist Party is able to develop a rounded-out economic and political program and line of action to meet the numerous complex problems of today. Understanding the direction in which events are developing, the Communist Party helps to unite, gives fighting determination and leadership to the working class on all issues.

Yet we know how much more has to be done. Much more

could be done if only our Party and its members showed still greater initiative in organizing more effectively the fight for the things the people need. Much more could be done if only our Party were numerically stronger, with firmer roots among the workers in every key plant and industry, in every working class community.

Our Party is indispensable to the welfare of our working class and our country. It must continue to grow rapidly in numbers and influence. Without a strong Party the working class is left to the mercy of a ruthless and aggressive gang of big-money men who defy every aspiration of the people, trample on its every right, and challenge all its gains. Without such a Party there cannot arise that fighting unity and collaboration of all anti-fascist men and women that can and will defeat the threat of fascism. Without such a Party the working class cannot consciously advance on the road to socialism.

Fighting Parties in All Countries

This is proven not only by our own experiences, but by the experiences of the working classes in other countries.

It is confirmed in the Soviet Union, where the Communist Party led the workers and peasant masses to socialism and led in the transformation of backward Czarist Russia into a highly industrialized and powerful socialist country. The united peoples of the Soviet Union set an example to the whole civilized world of indomitable courage and heroism in the war against Hitlerism and Japanese militarism. Who today dares truthfully challenge the fact that the years of heroic resistance by the Soviet Union against the powerful Hitler war machine, turned the tide of the war, and was the key to final victory over fascism? General Marshall in his report on the war calls the Battle for Moscow "the turning point of the war."

In the European countries conquered by fascism, it was chiefly the Communist Parties which bred hope in every home by organizing the hatred and indignation against fascism into powerful resistance movements which played a glorious role in the liberation of many parts of Europe. Today, Communist Parties lead and participate in real democratic peoples' governments, which are building a new life for their peoples

through the nationalization of industry, the division of the large estates among the landless peasants, the creation of producers' and consumers' cooperatives, etc.

In China, the example of the Communist-led resistance to Japanese invasion has inspired a powerful people's upsurge which is now determined to establish a united democratic sovereign China without reactionary intervention by the United States, or interference by any other country.

Is it any wonder that these Communist Parties have adherents numbering millions? For everywhere millions have learned to recognize and respect the great courage and genuine patriotism of the Communists and their unquestioned loyalty to the cause of the people. They see in the Communists true and devoted champions of their national interests.

The Party—Your Source of Strength

You have therefore every reason to feel great pride in your membership in the Communist Party. Your life has taken on a new meaning, a new significance. You now have a great purpose, shared by your fellow-Communists. You are not alone. You are strong.

Your individual activity will now be greatly enhanced because it will be strengthened by the collective work, study and thought of your comrades. In turn, you add new strength to our Party which values highly your fresh approach and enthusiasm, welcomes your ideas and opinions, and the contribution you can make to our common efforts.

Whether you are worker or professional, man or woman, Negro or white, youth or adult, you will find in our Party limitless opportunities for the activation and development of your abilities and your talents. All we can say is: learn from your comrades, but never hesitate to give them your opinions and experiences as well. Dig deeply into the science of Marxism-Leninism and gain new confidence from the knowledge you will discover in this great heritage of working-class experience and theory. Strive to become a worthy representative of the great class from which our Party springs.

It is in this spirit that we welcome you into our Party.

II

COMMUNIST PARTY, LEADER OF THE WORKING CLASS

How does our Party differ from other organizations? How is it organized? What will you find in the clubs? What help can you expect from your fellow-members? What is expected of you as a new member? These are some of the questions that are probably uppermost in your mind as you take your place in the ranks of the Communist Party.

We know we cannot say in these few pages everything that should be said. All we can do is discuss a few central questions, which all of us, both new and older Communists, have to master with greater understanding in order to appreciate fully the vital role our Party has to play in the United States.

You have often heard it said that the Communist Party is the *vanguard of the working class*. What does this mean? The term "vanguard," as you know, means to be in the forefront, at the head. As applied to our Party, it means that the Party stands at the head of the working class, sees further than the masses of the workers on all questions, and is in the forefront of all the struggles of the working people. That is why the Communist Party is the leading organization of the working class.

But what about other organizations? The working class has or participates in many organizations, all of which are important. There are the trade unions, the most important of all the broad mass organizations of labor. There are the fraternal and mutual-benefit associations, cooperatives, consumers' groups, peace organizations, veterans' organizations, Negro peoples' organizations, Labor and Farmer-Labor Parties, women's groups, youth groups, etc. Each of them has a definite and necessary role to play in the class-struggle of today.

Have you ever stopped to think about the specific purposes of these organizations? When you do, you will find that each of them has certain definite objectives. All of them however are limited in scope to this or that specific perspective. Some aim to protect particular interests of the working class in one

or another field; others aim to ease one or another hardship faced by the workers or other sections of the population. Some are organized, around a particular issue, to fight against one or another evil created by capitalism and its most barbaric expression, fascism. All of them, without exception, aim to improve the lot of particular sections of the working class, or people generally, within the framework of the present capitalist system.

Trade Unions Alone Are Not Enough

Take the trade unions. Trade unions are the most elementary and all-inclusive workers' organizations. They arose in response to the need of the workers to abolish competition within their own ranks in order to bargain more effectively with the employers. The workers learned early that only by combining themselves into their own trade unions could they prevent the owners of the factories from pushing down their conditions to the level of paupers by pitting one group of workers against another. Through the trade unions the workers have been able to secure shorter hours, better working conditions, and higher wages. But you know that the workers who are organized in unions must fight the same battles over and over again, must resist with every ounce of their strength the attacks on their unions, must protect at all times the gains secured in earlier struggles.

No one can minimize the importance of trade unions or the great battles the workers have fought for economic gains. If the working class failed to resist, through their organized efforts, the attacks of the employers upon their working conditions, "they would be degraded" as Karl Marx once pointed out, "to one level mass of broken-down wretches past salvation," and in their cowardly yielding to their exploiters in their day-to-day struggles, "they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement." That is why Communists do everything in their power to help build and strengthen the trade unions everywhere.

But it is an established fact that the trade union organizations cannot by themselves abolish the system of capitalist ex-

ploitation which compels the workers to sell their labor power to the owners of the factories in order to keep themselves and their families alive.

That simple truth is proven by the more than one hundred years of labor struggles which have taken place in our own country. And our working class has gone through many bitter, fierce and bloody struggles for union organization, for shorter hours, for higher wages, against speed-up, and around many other necessary demands.

These struggles have brought important results. There is now in existence a strong and powerful trade union movement, particularly in the key mass production industries, which defends the economic interests of the workers against the continuous onslaughts by the men of Wall Street. A large section of the trade union movement is more conscious of the need to bolster its fight on the economic front with extended activities on the political field. But powerful as these unions are today, and they will even be stronger tomorrow, they have only succeeded in easing somewhat the grip of exploitation. They have been unable to break it.

The Party Alone Leads All the Way!

That is why Karl Marx states: ". . . the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that, they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady." Marx showed in great detail, and on the basis of the facts, that large-scale capitalist industry with its tremendous productivity creates the preconditions for the achievement of a life of abundance, free from exploitation and oppression. He showed that the modern working class, organized, disciplined and united by the very system of capitalist production itself, has the task of leading all the exploited toward the elimination of capitalism, toward the socialist reorganization of society.

The working class, however, can accomplish this task only

under the leadership of its Communist Party, a Party armed with the science of the class struggle, able to unify all actions and organizations of the working class against the class of exploiters as a whole. Only the Communist Party can help the working class to learn how to fight not only against "effects" but also against "causes," not only on one front but on all fronts, not only for the craft or sectional interests of one or another group of workers, but for the interests of the whole class.

The Communists loyally "fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class." But they go further. "In the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement." (*The Communist Manifesto*.) In this they differ from the trade unions. In the day-to-day struggles, the Communist Party defends the immediate interests of the working class but it never for a moment loses sight of the ultimate interests, the historical goal, of the working class. That is why it can and does give unified direction to all organizations of the working class, making certain that the many struggles are linked in a single inseparable whole directed against the main enemy—monopoly capitalism.

A Party of Those Who Look Ahead

The Communist Party, like many other organizations, is a voluntary association of men and women. But here, too, there is a vast difference. Whereas the trade unions, for instance, are economic associations of men and women with various political convictions, with different views on how to improve the social conditions under which we live, the Communist Party consists of men and women with common political convictions, having common views on how to emancipate the working class and society as a whole.

The conditions of work under capitalism makes it difficult for the average man and woman to have the energy or time really to master the accumulated knowledge of the ages, so as to gain an insight into the whole history and development of mankind, to understand how mankind can develop further

on the path of social progress. Under the conditions of capitalism only a minority, the most advanced and loyal fighters of the working class, learn to understand its true class position and historic role, and pursue a policy in defense of its class interests. That is why this vanguard section of the working class organizes itself into the Communist Party.

Thus, the Communist Party differs from the trade unions, which embrace workers of different levels of understanding and class consciousness, whose experiences, whose knowledge of the true position of the working class in present-day society, vary greatly.

You know from your own experience that there are many workers in the unions today who still do not understand the full importance of trade union organization, let alone the necessity of a Communist Party.

You know, further, that in recent years many workers came into the unions from the farms, from the professions and other strata of the population, who never experienced the bitter struggles which finally gave birth to the unionization of the highly trustified industries. Many of them lack a spirit of militancy and struggle. Some hesitate to fight because they assume that the conditions under which they live must be so because they are somehow preordained. Others identify their interests with "management," their ideas and outlook being shaped by prejudices and misconceptions, by the ideology of their capitalist bosses and reactionary leaders of labor, which is alien to the interests of the workers.

Only in the Communist Party do you find that unity of thought and action which makes it possible to give a correct answer to the problems stirring the working class. Of course, there are different opinions expressed in our Party—but these are differences, not on principles and basic program, but as may be the case, on a specific policy, on methods and forms of carrying on the fight.

Our Party Differs from a Third Party

Perhaps it is necessary to say just a few words on the difference between the Communist Party and a "Third Party," a people's party. The need for a broad anti-fascist, anti-monopoly

people's party arises out of the special problems of America today. The aim of such a party will be to defeat fascist reaction, prevent the outbreak of another war, and improve the conditions of the working people by curbing the power of the big monopolies and working for democratic reforms on a broad scale. Its aim will, in general, be limited to achieving greater democracy and security for the people under the present system of capitalist economic relations.

With the working class playing the leading role, such a party, must unite all people, many who do not yet recognize the need of socialism, but are ready to unite to defeat the menace of fascism and war. The Communist Party, which must be an integral part of such a people's party, untiringly fights against all threats of fascism, but at the same time goes beyond the objectives of such a people's party in recognizing and working for socialism as the society which will forever eliminate fascism and war by eliminating their capitalist sources.

The rise of a people's party does not replace the need for a strong Communist Party. On the contrary, a strong Communist Party is a necessary condition for the realization of the aims and objectives of a fighting anti-fascist, anti-monopoly people's party.

A Party of Fighting Action

To fulfill the role of vanguard, a Communist Party does not just sit on the sidelines, drafting fancy blueprints of the future socialist society. It does not merely reflect and register what the masses of the working class think or experience. Nor is it a passive spectator in the struggles of today, issuing "proclamations" telling the workers what to do. Our Party fully realizes that if it were to do only that, it would become a narrow sect, incapable of influencing events, incapable of preparing the working class to achieve its historic goal of socialism, and confidence in its policies and program.

A Communist Party must participate directly in the struggles of the working class and of all oppressed peoples. Only through such struggles can the Communist Party create wide support and confidence in its policies and program.

As an integral part of the working class and people, with its members belonging to the unions and mass organizations, working in shops, mines and mills, on the farms or in the professions, living in urban or rural communities, the Communist Party participates actively in every struggle for the satisfaction of the immediate economic, social, and political needs of the working class and people.

We understand the lesson taught us by Lenin that "Only the struggle educates the exploited class. Only the struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizons, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will. . . ." Only in the fight for its daily needs does the working class learn and test the correctness of Communist policies.

It is the task of the Communist Party in these day-to-day battles not only to help win the workers' demands by developing the most effective forms and methods of fighting, but it must help to imbue the working class in the process of these struggles, on the basis of its own experience, with an understanding of its great liberating role in modern society. It is necessary that our Party make clear all the lessons of every struggle, every experience, in which the working class and the people participate.

Through these activities we help to weld the working class into a powerful, consciously independent political force, championing the interests of all the oppressed people against monopoly capitalism, against reaction and fascism, preparing it for the day when it will consciously enter the path of socialism as the only path toward genuine freedom and security. It is only the Communist Party that can imbue the working class with the spirit and understanding of socialism.

The Communist Party is thus a Party of mass action, a Party of mass struggles. It never stops thinking, planning, and working in the interest of the working class, our people, our nation.

It is in this sense that the Communist Party is the vanguard of the working class.

III

THE FACTS ABOUT THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Take the whole rise and development of our Communist Party in the United States. Of course, we cannot cover in a few pages our rich and glorious record of struggle in behalf of the workers, the farmers, the Negro people—in fact, in behalf of all oppressed and exploited people. Let us just give you a bird's-eye view of these contributions.

Our Communist Party was born in 1919, 27 years ago, in Chicago, Illinois, at a convention of delegates representing the majority membership—the working class core—of the Socialist Party who had been expelled by the petty-bourgeois reformist leadership. The conditions which gave birth to our Party were accelerated by the imperialist war, which in America, as in other countries, proved that the existing Socialist parties had become parties of reform, adapting themselves to the needs of the capitalist class and not the needs of the working class and people.

The great sufferings created by the war gave rise to a powerful revolutionary upsurge everywhere throughout the world. It expressed itself in America in a great strike movement which spread from coast to coast. These conditions demanded a fighting Communist Party able to advance and defend the true interests of the working class. Inspired by the wave of socialist and anti-imperialist revolutions in many parts of the world,



"MOTHER" ELLA REEVE BLOOR
Beloved Militant and Oldest
Charter Member, C.P., U.S.A.

and by the victory of the Russian Socialist revolution, tens of thousands of Socialists, some of the finest men of the old I. W. W., militant trade unionists and others, joined to found the Communist Party of the United States.

The Party's Roots in Our People's Struggles

Actually, our Party traces its history much further back than the last world war. It is in fact the fruition of all the earlier progressive movements for freedom and liberation, for greater democracy and security, which developed on our shores.

Our Party carries forward the precious heritage of 170 years ago when our people under the leadership of men like Jefferson, Washington and Paine, achieved independence from British domination. The Revolution was a necessary progressive step toward the development of America as a nation, toward advancing social progress. We identify ourselves with the many great movements and battles in the early half of the nineteenth century, for popular democratic education, for land reforms, for women's suffrage, for the abolition of slavery. We take pride in the many workingmen's parties which arose in numerous cities throughout that century, expressing the needs and aspirations of the men of labor to create a party to champion their own interests.

William H. Sylvis, founder of the first nationwide federation of trade union organizations, the National Labor Union, is remembered not only for his unparalleled energy devoted to the cause of the workingman in the period after the Civil War, but also for his interest and cooperation with the International Workingmen's Association (the First International), formed in London in 1864, at whose head was Karl Marx. Sylvis recognized the need for international solidarity and never tired of emphasizing that the "aims, objects and interests" of labor "are the same everywhere . . . an alliance that would embrace in its membership every workingman, no matter where his lot might be cast, would ensure a hearty welcome to the toilers in every quarter of the globe."

Yes, we trace our history far back, to those first early Marxist groups and Communist clubs that arose in this country in the

early 'fifties of the last century, which brought to the fore such men as Joseph Weydemeyer who by courageous service in the Civil war to end Negro slavery, rose to the rank of general in command of the St. Louis military district.

Our Party developed directly from the fighting days of the Socialist Party of Eugene Debs. Those early socialist fighters, led by men like Debs and "Big Bill" Haywood who gave leadership to the first great battles against the trusts among the railroad workers, metal miners, etc., conceived of the socialist movement as a militant, fighting revolutionary movement of the workers against the capitalists.

As you familiarize yourself with the great militant history of our American working class, you will get to know the names of many men and women, glorious martyrs and heroes, who already then dreamed about what our Party aims to realize. You will learn, furthermore, that the roots of our Party are sunk deep in the soil of our country, and cannot be uprooted, just as it is impossible to destroy the class which gave birth to our Party.

The socialists who decided to establish the American Communist Party were led by Charles E. Ruthenberg, whose staunch opposition to America's entry into the first imperialist world war, and consistent exposure of the reformist policies of the Socialist Party leadership, are remembered even to this day by many oldtimers throughout the country. But Ruthenberg is remembered for much more. He is remembered as the founder of our Party, its first National Secretary, a post which he held until his untimely death in 1927 at the age of 44.

Communists Pioneer in Union Organization

Our Party, during its formative years, attracted the most sincere and devoted trade union militants, led by William Z. Foster, whose name is connected with some of the most powerful battles of the American working class in the last fifty years—the Great Steel Strike of 1919, for example—and who now heads our Communist Party as its National Chairman and foremost leader.

From the day of its birth, our Party gave leadership in the

struggle for the most pressing needs of the working class and the people.

Our Party for many years virtually alone pioneered in the struggle for the organization of the unorganized, and for industrial unionism. Many Communists in the early 'twenties were expelled from the unions of the American Federation of Labor because they fought for industrial unionism as the most effective form of trade union organization in the mass production industries, for greater inner-union democracy, and for correct working class policies and militant forms of action as against the policies of class collaboration advanced by the reactionary leadership of the A. F. of L.

Small groups of Communists, in shop after shop, established committees to organize the workers. In the early hours of the morning, Communists could be seen in front of shop gates distributing leaflets and bulletins and explaining to the workers the need for organization. Despite the vicious espionage system, the blacklisting and intimidation prevalent in these industries at that time, Communists led numerous strikes and fought battles around many grievances of the workers, laying the groundwork for the union organization which was to follow.

When the organization drive was finally undertaken in the highly trustified industries, Communists and the workers whom they influenced formed, in many instances, the first organizing groups in the steel, auto, rubber and other plants, which gave birth to the great C.I.O.

Today, industrial unionism is a reality. Today, a powerful section of the labor movement has advanced a militant progressive program, has introduced greater democracy within its ranks, and is now carrying union organization into the South. Too often we forget the long years of indefatigable effort, in which Communists played no small role, to lay the foundation for the great edifice of labor that since has been constructed.

The Party Fights for Democratic Rights

Our Party consistently championed the democratic rights and civil liberties of the workers and the people generally.

It fought and won many battles for the right of the workers to organize, to assemble, to speak on streets and in halls, to picket and demonstrate. It came to the defense of militant workers arrested during strikes and other struggles, and fought against police brutality, injunctions and other repressive measures aimed to intimidate and prevent the working class from organizing and fighting for its rights and interests. The fight to free Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, the movement in behalf of the freedom of Sacco and Vanzetti, the campaigns in behalf of many men and women arrested under criminal syndicalist laws, and the thousands of battles of lesser prominence, fill many pages in the history of our Party.

The Party Fights for a Free South

Many of you no doubt know that our Party also pioneered in the organization of the South. As far back as 1929, Communists led a militant strike of the Gastonia textile workers, aroused nationwide protests against the armed attacks upon the strikers, and raised funds to keep the workers' tent colony alive when the workers were driven from their homes. In the years that followed, we took the first steps to set up Communist Party organizations of Negro and white in the South to provide leadership to the Negro and white employed and unemployed workers and sharecroppers. Many vivid stories of great heroism can be told of the first attempts to organize the sharecroppers under our leadership.

The Party Fights for Negro Rights

It is a widely known fact that our Party was the first since the Reconstruction period in American history to bring negro and white together in one common organization to fight a common battle in the very heart of the stronghold of Southern Bourbon reaction and "white supremacy." Our long years of consistent activity have contributed much to the mass political awakening and organizational activity in the South today, which is bound to bring about fundamental changes in its economic and political life.

Throughout the whole existence of our Party we have

fought against the oppression of the Negro people, against the whole system of Jim-Crowism, segregation, discrimination and lynch mob terror. For, from the first, we understood the true meaning of the words of Karl Marx that "labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded."

It was under our leadership that the case of nine unemployed Negro lads sentenced to die in the electric chair gained the support of a world-wide movement that aroused millions of Negro and white to demand "freedom for the Scottsboro boys." The growing unity between Negro and white, developed during the Scottsboro days in the early '30's, was spread into other fields: for unemployment relief, for admission and organization of Negro workers into unions, for jobs at equal pay, for eliminating the restrictive laws and practices which segregate the Negro people into filthy ghettos, for prosecution and death to lynchers, for abolition of the poll tax, and for the right of Negroes to vote in the South. We have fought with all our strength against every outcropping of the vicious poison of "white supremacy" in our own ranks and among the people as a whole.

We know only too well that this fight is not yet over—in fact it has just begun. But today there is a growing alliance between the Negro people and white labor that will help to wipe out the whole shameful system of Jim-Crowism, to establish equal rights and citizenship for the mass of the Negro people in the North and South.

The Party Fights for the Unemployed

In the dark days of the crisis of 1929-33 it was our Party that aroused America to action against mass starvation. On March 6, 1930, one million men and women gathered on the streets of our cities from one end of the nation to the other, demanding unemployment relief and insurance under the popular slogan: "Work or Relief."

There followed years of unending battles against evictions, to prevent the shutting off of gas and water, for increased relief payments, and against foreclosures of farms. Demonstra-

tions, hunger marches to city, state and national capitols, public hearings exposing the miseries of the people, "penny sales" which saved the land of many farmers—all this and more finally forced a reluctant Congress to pass measures of relief that staved off mass disaster for our people.

It was our demand for unemployment and social insurance, finally taken up by the entire labor movement and all progressive forces, by a growing movement of the unemployed workers themselves, that established social security as a law of the land during Roosevelt's administration.

The Party Fights Fascism at Home

When fascism reared its ugly head in Germany, we immediately issued a warning to our people that fascism meant ruthless violence against the people and wars of conquest. We called upon all democracy-loving Americans to unite to defeat the threat of fascism and war, against the main inciters of war—the German-Italian-Japanese Axis. We did not limit our fight to German, Italian and Japanese fascism. We pointed to the threat of fascism in our own country.

While everybody was saying "It can't happen here," we showed how Big Business—the Sixty Ruling Families—constituted a great menace of fascism in our own country. Following the pattern of Hitler's tactic of "divide and conquer," Big Business, and the numerous fascist groups they inspired, were bent on crushing the labor movement, on destroying every vestige of democracy, and every progressive measure, intimidating and dividing our people, under the guise of "fighting against Communism and fascism" and "protecting" American institutions.

We called upon the American working class and people to unite to defeat this threat of fascism. We called upon them to resist every attack on democratic liberties within our own borders, to create the most extensive unity of labor and all democratic sections of the population in support of the generally progressive features of President Roosevelt's policies, and against the reactionary drive of the monopolies and their political representatives.

The Party Fights Fascism Abroad

At the same time, we strove to arouse the conscience of America to resist the fascist onslaught on Spain, Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and the assault upon China by Japanese militarism. We left no stone unturned to convince America that it should establish friendly collaboration with the Socialist Soviet Union—the only country in the world which was pursuing a consistent peace policy aimed to stop fascist aggression. We advocated a foreign policy for our country of cooperation between the Soviet Union and the capitalist democracies, based on a program of collective security against the advance of fascism. We fought, with all our might, against the Munich policy of appeasing fascism, which gave free rein to Hitler to swallow one small country after another until he was strong enough to challenge the entire world. Collective



A Party club swings into action to arouse the people of the neighborhood to the mounting danger of fascist enslavement following the Munich betrayal.

security could have prevented the bloodiest war in the history of mankind.

You know that thousands of American boys, most of them Communists, fought for Spanish democracy; that the bodies of more than half of them lie buried in the blood-drenched soil of Spain. You know that we organized demonstrations to boycott Japanese goods and to stop shipments of scrap iron to Japan. We helped to raise funds to aid China fighting for its life against the Japanese invaders. Yes, we knew what others learned too late—that the stake of America was bound up with that of all peoples fighting and resisting fascism.

And when German, Italian and Japanese fascism undertook to conquer the whole world, we contributed with great devotion and sacrifice to the war to defeat them. 15,000 Communists joined the armed services; thousands of them fought on all the far-flung battlefronts; many never returned, others were seriously wounded, hundreds were decorated for bravery. At home, we Communists fought to increase production to meet the needs of our armed forces, led the struggle to enforce labor's no-strike pledge, actively participated in every phase of war work. At the same time we demanded active military and political collaboration between America, Britain and the Soviet Union as the only key to victory in war, even as it remains today the only key to world peace. We spoke out for the speedy opening up of a Second Front in the West to assure a rapid defeat of Hitler's war machine. Yes, we can look back with pride to our wartime contribution.

Communists Do Not Fear to Admit Mistakes

We do not wish to hide the fact that we Communists made many mistakes during these 27 years. But contrary to the practice of other political parties, we openly acknowledge our mistakes.

We are guided in our activity by the fundamental principle that a real Communist Party must regularly examine its work, critically expose its every weakness and mistake, and speedily strive to overcome them. We Communists could never have made contributions of any permanent value unless we had

tested our policies in life itself, noted all mistakes we had committed, and openly admitted and corrected these mistakes before the working class and the people as a whole.

Mistakes committed by the Communist Party, or by individual Communists, do not at any time prove the incorrectness of the great science which guides our daily work. Rather, it shows that we have not mastered our science fully, especially in its living application to changing events in our own country.

The most serious errors committed by our Party were made under the leadership of Earl Browder, recently expelled from our Party. Browder advanced a system of ideas that were hostile to the fundamental interests of the working class. If our party had persisted in Browder's course, it would have been disastrous for the Communist movement, for the American working class.

Browder projected the false theory that American monopoly capitalism would play a progressive, liberating role in the postwar period, furthering the independence and liberation of colonies and backward nations, advancing the economic development of all backward and devastated areas. He insisted that the most decisive and powerful sections of American monopoly capitalism had reconciled themselves to the need to live forever at peace with the Socialist Soviet Union, and that an era of peaceful harmonious world relations was unfolding. From this he drew the conclusion that Big Business, of its own accord, would double the wages of the American workers, and expand production to provide full employment, and that America faced a long period of unprecedented prosperity. He maintained that these monopoly interests were ready to collaborate with labor in the postwar period, and urged labor not to do anything to jeopardize this newly born unity.

The greatest of all crimes committed under Browder's leadership was the liquidation of the Communist Party in 1944, and the establishment of the Communist Political Association as a non-partisan educational organization, thus negating the need of an independent Marxist working class party.

This was, as you can see, a system of ideas which obviously

revised all the main concepts and principles of Marxism-Leninism.

It is clear that had this program, advocated by Browder, continued to dominate the work and activities of American Communists, the working class would have been unprepared to meet and resist the reactionary postwar offensive of American imperialism at home and its drive toward world domination.

Communists Correct Mistakes Speedily

Thanks to the tireless energies and unswerving Marxist leadership of William Z. Foster, to the timely criticism of Jacques Duclos, the secretary of the French Communist Party, and the work of the leadership as a whole, we succeeded in ridding ourselves of these anti-working class ideas and policies.

For several months our membership and leadership engaged in a thorough and critical discussion of our work and policies, and overwhelmingly rejected Browder's utopian schemes. This discussion culminated in an Emergency Convention held at the end of July, 1945, which reconstituted the Communist Party as the Marxist vanguard of the working class, unanimously repudiated Browder's policies, and placed our Party once again on a firm Marxist course, in which it could fulfill its responsibilities to the working class and the nation. The political line and immediate program of struggle outlined at this Convention have been fully confirmed by the events that followed, and guide the work of our Party today.

You should study the history of our Party. There is no better way of mastering the science of Marxism-Leninism than to study it on the basis of its application to the concrete conditions and problems of our own country. Marxism-Leninism is not an abstract academic science which can be learned merely from books. The knowledge gained from the books must be applied in practice. Only practice proves whether our policies correctly reflect the conditions in the country and the world, whether we have raised correct slogans to meet the needs of our people, slogans which, because they are timely and correct, can arouse millions to action.

IV

PARTY DEMOCRACY AND UNITY OF ACTION

Our Party could not have made any lasting contribution to the advancement of the working class and the people's welfare if it were not so organized as to guarantee the most effective unity of action of its entire membership, and the closest connection with the working class. The tasks our Communist Party must fulfill, cannot be achieved unless the Party is a unified organization. Therefore, the Communist Party performs its vanguard role not only through its correct policies firmly grounded in the needs of our people, but also through its system of organization.

"The Party can lead the practical struggle of the working class and direct it towards one aim only if all its members are *organized* in one common detachment, welded together by unity of will, unity of action and unity of discipline." (*History of the C.P.S.U.*, p. 47.)

The underlying principle which guides and gives strength and unity to the organization of the Communist Party is known as *democratic centralism*. It is very important to understand this principle of Communist organization.

What Does Democratic Centralism Mean?

By democratic centralism we mean a system of Party organization which combines the democratic and active participation of the membership in the life and work of the Party with the best forms of centralized leadership so as to unify the activity and struggles of the Party and the working class as a whole. Democratic centralism is therefore a fusion of the broadest inner democracy, with centralization of leadership responsibility for the conduct of Communist activity, from local, city and state leadership right up to the national leadership which directs and guides the work of the entire Party.

Democratic centralism is the essence of the Constitution of

the Communist Party of the United States, adopted at our last convention. It is impossible to choose any particular clause or clauses which, standing alone, embody democratic centralism. A study, especially of Articles IV, VI and VII of the Constitution, will indicate the main features of democratic centralism as expressed in the structure and functioning of our Party in the United States. This you will find includes the following:

1. The election of Communist leadership, at all levels, by the fullest democratic participation of the membership on the basis of a critical review of the work and policies of the Party, and a critical evaluation of all leading committees and individuals.

2. Leading committees are responsible to the membership by whom they were elected and must regularly report back to the membership.

3. All members have the right and responsibility to participate in determining Party policy, and must therefore be drawn fully into the discussion and formulation of policies and decisions.

4. After a thorough discussion of any question, decisions are arrived at by a majority vote. All members, including those disagreeing, are then duty-bound to carry out such decisions. The will of the minority is thus subordinated to the will of the majority.

5. Each Communist organization is subordinated to the next higher committee, and central authority is vested in the national convention, the highest body of the Communist



ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN
National Committee, C.P., U.S.A.

Party, which not only has the authority to act on any and all aspects of Party program, work, organization and leadership, but elects the national leadership to carry through its will and decisions.

As you see, democratic centralism combines the principle of election of leading committees and broad democratic discussion of Party policies with the principle of subordinating the minority to the majority, the lower organizations and committees to the higher committees, up to the Party's National Committee and National Convention.

It is this principle which assures a unified Communist Party, combining all members and all organizations into a united whole, with every member belonging to one of the clubs, with all clubs, sections, county and state divisions joined together under one central leadership, and carrying through the same general political line and activities.

Let us see how this works in practice.

Democratic Centralism in Practice

Every Communist belongs to one of the Communist clubs—in a shop, industry or community. He or she is required to attend meetings and pay dues and to participate in the activity decided upon by the club to which he or she belongs. The members in their respective clubs meet weekly, or at least twice a month. The club determines its order of business on the basis of the needs of the working people in its community, shop or industry, the central issues of the day, as well as certain questions referred to the clubs by higher committees for discussion and action.

Every question before the club is discussed by the membership and decisions are made. Each member is then required to assume a share of the responsibility of the entire club for the execution of its decisions. The club is led by an Executive Committee, elected by the club membership once a year, which directs and guides the work, plans and prepares the agendas for club meetings, and helps the work of individual members.

All clubs in a particular area (or in one industry) are united

in either a section or county division, directed by a leading committee elected by a section or county convention. These conventions are held, in most instances, once a year, with delegates from the clubs in attendance. All section and county organizations within a state comprise the state organization of the Communist Party, led by a state committee elected at a state convention. In some special cases, a few state organizations are combined to form a district organization, like the Northwest District consisting of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, or the New England District, which includes Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island. All the state and district organizations are then united in the national organization.



HENRY WINSTON
Organization Sec'y, C.P., U.S.A.

The supreme body of the Party is the National Convention held every two years, with delegates from every state and district based on proportional representation. The National Convention reviews the work of the Party over the preceding period, analyzes the situation in the world and in our own country, and outlines the general policy of the Party for the ensuing period. It examines the work of the leadership of the Party and elects a new National Committee to guide and lead the Party throughout the country in the period between conventions. The National Committee, in turn, elects the National Board, which meets in between the meetings of the National Committee (held usually three times a year) to apply, implement and extend the general policies adopted at the national convention to specific situations and developments as they arise.

Leading committees of the Communist Party, whether in the clubs, sections, counties, cities, states and districts, or in the nation as a whole, are elected directly by the membership or by its representatives. Members are elected to higher committees who have proven their unquestioned loyalty to the working class and the Party, who have shown their ability to understand the needs and problems of the people, who have shown Communist steadfastness and strength of character in the struggles against the enemy, and a readiness to devote all their time and energy to advance the cause of the working class and the people. It is such individuals, the best in our Party, that the membership selects to head the Party locally and nationally.

The members of our National Board compose a collective team—all contributing their best abilities to the task of providing leadership to our entire Party on all problems of the day. William Z. Foster is our National Chairman. Eugene Dennis is our General Secretary. The other officers are: Henry Winston, Organization Secretary; John Williamson, Labor Secretary; Jack Stachel, Chairman of the Education, Agitation and Publications Department; Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Chairman of the Women's Commission; Councilman Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., Chairman of the Legislative Committee; Steve Nelson, Chairman of the National Groups Commission. In addition the National Board includes Irving Potash, Josh Lawrence and Louis Weinstock, all leading trade unionists, and Robert Thompson, Chairman of the New York State Communist organization.

V

THE MEANING OF COMMUNIST DISCIPLINE

Some of our fellow workers in the shops and communities, often under the influence of press, radio and labor misleaders, raise questions concerning democracy in our Party and its relation to Communist discipline. They often view Communist discipline as being the blind mechanical discipline characteristic of armies or typical of factory production. They often interpret the loyalty of Communists to their Party as a sort of blind obedience, a robot-like carrying out of Communist tasks. Nothing is further from the truth, nothing more contrary to the Party's principles and practices.

Discipline in the Communist Party is not imposed from above. It is voluntary and self-assumed. It is based on conviction and principle. No orders are issued to members



S/Sgt. Robert Thompson, now Chairman of the N. Y. State Committee of the C.P., awarded the DSC "for extraordinary heroism in action" in New Guinea.

which they must blindly carry out. Such discipline could never produce the conscious, unified activity that distinguishes the Communist Party from other organizations. A Communist Party which demands that its members know how to assume their responsibilities requires not blind followers, but men and women who are full of initiative, who understand the issues of the moment, and who know how to solve problems independently.

Discipline and Democracy in Action

Communist discipline rests upon the broadest inner democracy, upon the fullest expression of opinions and thorough discussion within the ranks of the Party. It is through the process of inner democracy, the conflict of different opinions, that the common line of the Party is developed. For only such thorough discussions involving the entire membership can create the clarity and conviction necessary for the fulfillment of decisions made by the various bodies of our Party.

But inner democracy in the Communist Party has a direction and purpose. It must lead to decisions and actions on the part of each Communist organization and each member. It must result in heightened Communist activity, in greater individual and collective responsibility for the carrying through of the decisions of the Party. Stalin once gave a vital characterization of the essence of inner Party democracy. He said:

"Real democracy means that the Party membership functions in the Party organizations, that the Party membership decides Party questions and general practical questions as well, that the Party membership passes *its own resolutions*, and obliges its organizations to put these resolutions into effect.

"Democracy does not consist only in democratic elections. Democracy *in elections* cannot yet be called real democracy. Napoleon III was elected by universal suffrage; but who does not know that this elected emperor was one of the greatest oppressors of the people?

"What we are referring to is democracy *in action*, whereby the Party membership decides questions itself and acts itself."

Democracy in action—that is the essence of the democracy so vital to a Communist Party. The Communist Party is not a debating society. It cannot endlessly debate questions. Once the discussions are ended, once the majority has arrived at a decision, there exists but one rule for Communists—to carry out the decision made by the majority. This takes place automatically in our Party. For discipline in the Communist Party is a voluntary discipline, assumed by all members, based on their own conviction, understanding, devotion and loyalty to the cause to which the Communist Party dedicates all its efforts.

The Unity of Will and Action

This general concept of democratic procedure—where the decision of the majority becomes the decision of all—is actually no different from that held by most Americans and to which most existing organizations are committed. The difference



Capt. Herman Bottcher, called a "one-man army" in Buna and Leyte. Killed in action after being awarded the DSC and cluster, Purple Heart and two clusters, and winning his commission in the field.

lies in the fact that few organizations adhere strictly to this procedure. It matters little to some organizations if expressions of varying points of view are never resolved, if decisions made are not executed. But in our Party discussions and decisions are barren and worthless if not realized in life.

Why is such discipline necessary in the Communist Party? Let us refer again to what Stalin says:

"... iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and contest of opinion within the Party. Least of all does it mean that discipline must be 'blind.' On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline. But after a contest of opinion has been closed, after criticism has been exhausted and a decision has been arrived at, unity of will and unity of action of all Party members are the necessary condition without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the Party is conceivable."

Imagine, if you can, the consequences if each Communist should decide which decision he wanted to carry out and which he wanted to ignore. Imagine further that every Communist club, when it disagreed with a decision, would decide to do the opposite. Or, imagine that the Communist Party consisted of different groups and factions, each pursuing different policies and offering different solutions to problems faced by the workers. You can see how the Communist Party would be torn asunder in a thousand different directions, and that it could never achieve, under such circumstances, that unity of will and action which is its fundamental strength.

The unity of will and action of all members is the indispensable condition without which one can imagine neither a united Party nor the furnishing of unified direction to the struggles of the working class. Such a party could not fulfill its historic responsibility.

VI

YOUR PLACE IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Having joined the Party, you will enter a Communist club. This will be your most immediate and direct organizational contact with the Party. It is in your club that you will gain the necessary understanding of the tasks to be carried out. It is in your club that you will help to formulate the policies to meet the problems of your community, your shop or industry. And it is through your own activities conducted under the guidance of your club, that you make your contributions to the work of the Party as a whole.

A Communist Party club consists of from five to fifty members, and sometimes more. There are different types of clubs. The shop clubs consist of Communists, all of whom are employed in the same plant, mine, dock or store. The members of an industrial club all work in the same industry. In the community club, men and women of many different callings, living in the same neighborhood, are organized on a territorial basis. In some states, there are also professional clubs to which belong men and women of the same or related professions.

Do not think that the club you are entering will be a "perfect" club, in which everything runs smoothly and efficiently at all times. The chances are that the club you have joined still has many problems and difficulties. No matter what type of club you have entered, you will find things you can help correct and improve. You will find that your club has many problems, such as to organize more effectively the mass activities of the club and its members, to distribute the work to be done on the basis of the abilities of each comrade, to activate people who have recently drifted away from active participation in club life, to organize more lively and interesting meetings, educate the members properly and a whole series of other problems. Sometimes you will find that the meetings start late, that the agenda is not well prepared, that the political discussions are not timely or to the point, and that the discussions

do not lead to practical mass activity. But all such problems can be resolved only by collective effort, with every Communist helping to expand the independent activities of his club and its members, and pitching in to make the meetings more fruitful and stimulating.

But we know you will find your comrades the most honest, loyal and understanding human beings you have ever worked with, people who have much to teach you—and a great deal to learn from you. You'll find them ready to take your criticism and equally ready to give you theirs.

It is your duty to help, along with the others, to improve and develop the work of your club. Do not be afraid to criticize and offer your suggestions. Do not hesitate to show, by example, how the work should be done to bring greater results.

Rights and Duties of Party Members

What is expected from you? No doubt you have already read Articles III and IV in our Party Constitution which deal with the obligations of Communist membership and the rights and duties of all members. We want to summarize these briefly.

You are familiar with the minimum requirements for Communist membership. Every member of our Party is expected to attend club meetings regularly, except when unavoidably prevented from attending, and to participate in the making of the club decisions by freely and fully expressing opinions on the problems under discussion and voting on each question. Every member is expected to pay dues regularly each month, recognizing that dues payments not only show the strength of the Party organization, but help furnish the funds necessary for the carrying out of our work. Every member of the Communist Party is expected to carry out the assignments he has accepted at a club meeting. A member should not accept tasks which he knows he cannot fulfill.

What does this actually mean? In an organization like ours there is no room for honorary members, who think that they can be Communists merely by agreeing with our program. Nor is it enough for members to be simply dues-paying mem-

bers and allowing the other comrades to carry the burden of Communist work and responsibility. Nor is it sufficient for a member merely to attend club meetings regularly. Every Communist must do all this and more. Every member of the Party must strive to be an active member. The outstanding quality of a Communist is the capacity to combine thought and action. It is not sufficient for a Communist to be able to explain the new events that take place. It is equally necessary for a Communist to know what to do at a given moment, and to be able to help carry out that which must be done.

The Party Develops Your Abilities

We want every member of the Party to participate in the work and life of the organization to the best of his or her ability. This means that all of us are responsible for the carrying out of certain phases of the decisions arrived at in our club; for only in such a manner can the plans we work out collectively be realized in life. We do not want anyone, and particularly you as a new member, to accept assignments you cannot fulfill. It is the responsibility of your club to help you assume work that will enable you to render the greatest service and develop your abilities most rapidly.

In the first place, we want our members to carry out their assignments where they work, where they live, or in the organizations to which they belong. Here the job of the individual members is to defend actively the interests of his fellow workers; to participate actively in the actions initiated and developed by these organizations; and to set an example to others of conscientious carrying through of responsibility. But, in addition, a Communist must constantly help to educate his fellow workers through the sale and distribution of Communist literature, securing subscriptions for the Communist press, individual discussions, and through influencing the most militant workers to join the Communist Party.

If you have entered a shop or industrial club, your work will be fairly well defined, in keeping with the tasks set forth by the club to be accomplished in your place of work or industry. However, if you belong to a community club, and are active

at the same time in a union or other organization, you should discuss with your club the extent to which you can participate in the activity developed in the community.

Many workers feel that if they join the Party they will have no time left for the work they are doing at present. This is especially true of workers active in trade unions, but it is also true of those working in fraternal societies, veterans organizations, neighborhood clubs, Negro peoples' organizations, consumers groups, or other non-Party mass organizations. But Communist work is first of all work among the people, wherever they are. No Communist can do effective Communist work unless he or she is intimately bound up with the workers in their mass organizations, their places of work, the communities in which they live.

You will find that membership in the Communist Party helps to make your activity more fruitful, improves its quality and secures better results. If you belong to another organization, you will secure the necessary help from the members in your club to organize and plan your activities, and you can always call for any additional assistance from any of the leading bodies of the Party in your city and county.

But regardless of where you work, what organization you belong to, in what community you may live, there is work for you to do. Our Party needs people who know how to organize struggles, how to speak at meetings, how to write leaflets and prepare public statements, how to sell literature, and secure subscriptions to our press. You will find, we are sure, the spot where you can make your best contribution.

A few more words. Resolve now that every bit of work you undertake you will carry out completely and to the best of your ability. Try to become that kind of Communist who carries through everything he undertakes. To accomplish this, you must remember not to bite off more than you can chew.

Share the Party with Your Friends and Family

Do not throw off your old friends. Retain and keep alive your old normal connections. No doubt most of your friends, or your relatives, are still outside of the Party. Continue see-

ing them. Do not be intolerant of their views. These are people who must learn what the Party is, what it is striving to achieve, what it means to them. You are the most likely person to bring them closer to the Party.

Not only should you maintain your old friends, but you should make new friends, especially in your shop, your union, your organization, or the neighborhood in which you live. You will find that our Communist press, our hundreds of popular pamphlets, will help you bring them nearer to our Party. Use this material constantly—it is your best aid.

And, above all, do not neglect your family—your wife or husband, your children. You cannot be concerned with the welfare of the people and overlook the problems that arise in your home and that need your time and attention. We cannot be so busy that we fail to realize that our families can benefit greatly by the new knowledge we have gained in our great organization. If anything, the whole spirit of our Party should help you bring into your own home a new element of human understanding, warmth and appreciation of your family ties.

The Communist Press—A Daily Guide

Instinctively, when people discover you are a Communist, they expect you to be able to answer any question under the sun, be it on politics, economics, trade unionism, or foreign affairs. They also expect you to help them solve all their varied problems, including, as you will soon find out, many of their personal problems. This is at it should be. Of course, you can't answer all questions or solve all problems. But every Communist has to consciously strive to equip himself to give leadership to the workers and to answer the questions which bother them. It is the duty of each and every one of us to be as well informed as possible and to understand all the main issues. By raising such questions in the clubs, and by discussing them collectively, we enrich our individual knowledge.

That is why we Communists place such emphasis upon the regular reading of the Communist press, the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker*, and on the Pacific Coast, the *Peoples World*. In

our Communist press you will find an explanation of the events in the country and the world as they take place. You will find articles and editorials which give the Party's position on the most important questions of the day—and show what has to be done. Therefore, start now to read our press daily.

Reading the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker* does not mean headline reading, skimming through the pages. Nor does it mean giving equal attention and careful consideration to every item. Reading the *Daily Worker* with a purpose means to select those articles, editorials and columns which will help you to improve your work in the organization to which you belong, the shop in which you work, or the community in which you conduct your activity. Your aim must be to find those articles and editorials which contain the general directives of the Party requiring immediate action. Study these, note the main points, think through all suggestions, decide what you can do about them. Your aim must be to find in the *Daily Worker*



Selling the DAILY WORKER on the picket line during a strike.

the answers to those questions your fellow workers raise and talk about.

Make the reading of the Daily Worker a daily habit.

In addition, there is the theoretical and political magazine, *Political Affairs*. In it you will find much food for thought. It contains political articles which examine in detail new trends and new developments. In it you will also find theoretical articles, not only from the writings of the foremost Marxists of the world, but articles which analyze scientifically many new theoretical problems we face in our own country.

Political Affairs cannot be read in one sitting. It is a magazine which should be studied throughout the entire month of issue, since it will give you much of the reasoning that lies behind our policies and immediate tasks.

Study Marxism-Leninism from Today On

But above all, start at once your study of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, recognizing now that the more you equip yourself with its main theories and principles, the more effective will your work become. None of us are schoolboys. But all of us try to increase our knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, and we study not for the purpose of being able to parade with the new thoughts—we study in order to fight more effectively.

Too often one hears that the Marxist classics, the original writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, are too difficult, beyond the ability of the average man or woman to master, that only those who have been accustomed to study can really grasp the fundamental concepts in their many-sided richness. But that is exactly what our enemies want us to believe. Marxism-Leninism is a working-class science. It reflects and explains the conditions of life of the working class. Its basic ideas therefore can in the main be grasped by the ordinary man or woman who works for a living. It was written for you—you can understand it.

But Marxism-Leninism is a science. It must therefore be studied as a science. It requires real effort, real application, real determination to understand its fundamental principles. Stalin

stressed this when he said: "It is a mistake to think that only a narrow circle of people can master theory. . . . To master the theory of Marxism-Leninism one has only to desire to do so and to display persistence and firmness of will in the achievement of this aim."

Sometimes a member of our Party will take up a pamphlet when tired and find that he gets little out of it. He will then draw the conclusion that it is written in too ponderous language, that he cannot understand it. Sometimes a member will look around at the shelves of Marxist-Leninist books, become overwhelmed by them, and not know where to begin. Instead of sitting down and talking it over with the comrades of his club, or with leading comrades in the state or district, he sometimes feels embarrassed at the thought of even placing such questions before his comrades, not knowing that all of us have passed through exactly the same stage. Then too, we find comrades who say that the long hours of work, the many tasks of the club organization, just make it impossible to find any time for studying. They forget, however, that just a few hours put aside for study would make their work much more efficient, because they would understand better how to conduct it.

Therefore, make up your mind to organize your work and time so as to set aside an evening, a Saturday afternoon, or a Sunday morning, to do some studying. We append to this pamphlet a list of readings, recommending those you should read in the next months or year. Do not be disheartened at your first attempt if you find some difficulties in understanding what you are reading. We can give you numerous examples of men and women who did not know how to read or write when they joined our Party, who have not only mastered those difficulties while in our Party, but have mastered the main theoretical ideas contained in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Just remember that there is no short-cut to knowledge.

Your own individual study will be helped if you do not hesitate to discuss with your comrades questions you do not understand. It will also be greatly helped by your attendance

at the classes organized in your city, county or state where the organized guidance of an instructor will make it easier for you to study by yourself.

When you do this, you will really begin to appreciate the meaning of the old slogan: "Fight to Learn, Learn to Fight!"

Help Build a Mass Communist Party

We have much work ahead of us. We are now in one of the most decisive periods in the history of our people and nation. Will reaction and fascism conquer, or will the people succeed in defeating this menace that threatens our country? Will there be an atomic war by American imperialism for world domination? Will another type of Hitler world order engulf mankind?

The answer lies with us, the working people of our country and the world. We Communists must help make the decision. A strong, fighting Communist Party, growing daily in influence and numbers, can help to determine the outcome of these events in our country, in the interest of the working class, in the interest of our people, and in keeping with the real interests of our nation. A strong Communist Party can help advance the unity of the working class, the unity of all democratic and progressive forces to defeat the reactionary drive toward fascism and war. Collaboration between Communists and all anti-fascists will help to create in our country an organized anti-fascist force—a true people's party—that will be able to deliver a powerful blow against those who would impose fascism upon our land. You can help to bring about that type of party by helping systematically to bring into our Party the most loyal and devoted working-class fighters, the most advanced elements in the entire progressive camp.

We can and will, with your help and with the many tens of thousands who will join our Party in the future, build a Communist Party that will win the support and the following of the millions of Americans from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the borders of Canada to Mexico.



SUGGESTED READINGS for NEW MEMBERS

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE U.S.A.	\$.10
WHY AMERICA NEEDS A STRONG COMMUNIST PARTY, by William Z. Foster	.05
PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZED LABOR TODAY, by William Z. Foster	.10
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, Special Plenum Issue, September, 1946, containing reports by William Z. Foster, Eugene Dennis, John Williamson, Morris Childs, Max Weiss	.25
PEACE OR WAR: THE PEOPLE VERSUS THE WARMAKERS, by Eugene Dennis	.03
WHAT AMERICA FACES: THE NEW WAR DANGER AND THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC SECURITY, by Eugene Dennis	.10
SOCIALISM—WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU, by A. B. Magil	.10
WHO OWNS AMERICA? by James S. Allen	.10
MARXISM-LENINISM VERSUS REVISIONISM, by William Z. Foster, Jacques Duclos and others	.25
THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels	.05
WAGE-LABOR AND CAPITAL, by Karl Marx	.15
VALUE, PRICE AND PROFIT, by Karl Marx	.15
SOCIALISM, UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC, by Frederick Engels	.10
THE TEACHINGS OF KARL MARX, by V. I. Lenin	.20
FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM, by Joseph Stalin	.10
MASTERING BOLSHEVISM, by Joseph Stalin	.10
MARXISM VERSUS LIBERALISM, Joseph Stalin-H. G. Wells Interview	.10

These pamphlets, as well as hundreds of other works of Marxism-Leninism, can be purchased through your local Party club, literature center or bookshop. By mail order them from:

NEW CENTURY PUBLISHERS, 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.