

'I TAKE A FRESH LOOK' (10)

The Future of the Party

By ALEXANDER BITTELMAN

DOES THE Communist Party of the United States really have a future? Too many good people ask this question nowadays. It is one of the symptoms of our crisis, of course. But it also reflects a general condition of political questioning and reappraisal that exists among wide circles of labor and its allies.

This condition is interesting and important. The more thoughtful and politically alert progressive elements, especially among the trade unionists, can't help but feel that the existing political and party alignments in the country are very little suited for meeting the needs of the people. They must be troubled by the thought that labor and its allies ought to be able to exert infinitely more influence on the political life of the nation than is now the case, considering their potential and even actual political strength. Why such a gap between their political strength and the capacity to make it count in terms of legislative and other political achievements?

The political future of labor and its allies is much in the minds of many people. This includes an estimate and reappraisal not only of the major political parties but also of the smaller parties and political groupings. That means us, too. Communists and their sympathizers are not immune to these questions and reappraisals.

Those questioning the need and possibility of a Socialist sys-

tem in the United States naturally question the need for a Socialist party. On the other hand, we find a distinct and growing urge for getting together, eventually into one party, among slowly but surely widening groups of socialist and Marxist-minded people. And these currents too raise the question of the future of our Party.

TO THIS QUESTION there is a brief answer: the future of the Communist Party lies with the future of the American working class. It lies with the future of America. To Marxist-Leninists this is the most convincing answer.

Of course, the Party is in very deep crisis but it is essentially a crisis in the relationship between the Party and the democratic and labor movements. Though maturing for a long time, the crisis came to a head when a new historic period was being born, the period of peaceful coexistence and competition. This has made things more difficult by raising many new and big problems whose very nature is not yet fully clear, let alone the answers. But this emerging period is bringing opportunities for our Party's growth which we have never had in all our history.

Like all vital organizations, we had our ups and downs, advances and setbacks, but continued to live as a Party, with our ideology, policies and organization. At certain turns in world and American history, we had our internal crises, mild and

severe, but we managed to get out of them as a Party, though not always in the best way. There is no ground at all for the thought that we will not be able to get out of the present crisis. We most certainly will, and in much better shape than from the previous crises.

To accomplish this aim, we have a lot to do: programmatically, politically and organizationally. To this we must devote ourselves, as a Party, as a living political and ideological organism.

THE FUTURE OF our Party can be seen most clearly by a reappraisal of our vanguard role. What is it to be in terms of tasks facing the American people and its working class in the ensuing historical period of peaceful coexistence and competition? What are to be our Party's relations with the trade union movement, the Negro liberation movement, farmers' movements, and all anti-monopoly currents and struggles? What is our Party's role going to be in the growing urge for unity among the socialist-minded elements in this country?

What Marx and Engels wrote more than a century ago in the "Communist Manifesto" on the vanguard role of Communists cannot of course be taken literally and mechanically for the solution of this problem today in the United States. The concrete problems facing Communists at that time, in their rela-

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tion to other working class movements and parties, were far different from what the American Communists face at present. But there are some basic ideas there on the vanguard role of Communists which can be of inestimable value to us as a starting point for the solution of our own problems in our own way.

"Communists," said Marx and Engels, "are practically the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others." This has been proven true throughout the long history of Communist movements in all lands. Namely: that in practice, in the actual life and progressive struggles of their own peoples, Communists have always been in the front ranks, fighting most resolutely for the interests of the working class and its allies, and in this way enthusing and vitalizing the whole movement to go forward.

Hasn't this been our own role in the 38 years of our Party's existence? By and large, it was, though some of our programmatic positions and political pol-

that the Soviet Union got the secret of the "new moon" from the Rosenbergs? Mr. Lane does not have the I.Q. to see that his eagerness to make headlines has led him to shatter his own case against his former victims. For if the Rosenbergs stole the satellite secret from the United States, Mr. Miles is making a liar, or worse, out of President Eisenhower and every scientist in the Army and Navy, all of whom admit they are not yet able to put into practice the secret which Mr. Miles says they possess. If what the Rosenbergs stole, therefore, was the secret of a non-existent satellite, how trustworthy was Mr. Miles' case against them in 1951?

The Earth-moon leaves the Kaufman Doctrine a sordid rambles. That beep-beep from the skies will not let you rest, Judge Kaufman. Only the truth can give you rest that truth which is whirling around our planet every hour and a half.

MILTON HOWARD

icies were not always right or effective.

"THEORETICALLY," said Marx and Engels further, "they (the Communists) have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results." Allowing for the very serious failures and weaknesses resulting from traditional dogmatic attitudes the role of American Communists in the theoretical sphere was generally of the same kind.

But all this is only a starting point. The big job is to discover the practical forms, ways and methods by which Communists who are members of trade unions and other progressive mass organizations can in fact be recognized as the most advanced and resolute members able to enthuse others and thus help push the whole movement forward. This has to be sought for and discovered in the existing conditions and situations and in the light of the major tasks facing the American people and its working class in the ensuing new historical period.

This is one side of the job. The other is the theoretical. The task here is to determine programmatically the "line of march" of the American people, of the working class and its allies, from now on and until the conditions mature for the peaceful and constitutional transitions to Socialism. The task is further to analyze "the conditions," in the United States and in the world at large, in which the American people will advance on the road of social progress. The task finally is to determine scientifically "the ultimate general results" of the current economic and political movements of the working class and its allies in the light of the general line of march and the conditions in which it is taking place.

In other words, it is the task of producing a definitive and up-to-date Party program, of formulating a new tactical orientation and of concretizing the vanguard role of Communists in accord with program, tactical orientation and existing conditions.

(Tomorrow: The Party and the Unions.)