

The Proposed C. P. Changes

"On the basis of the proposed changes in the Communist Party, will we still demand of a person that he believe in socialism as a qualification for membership? Or, would we recruit anyone in this period if he agrees on winning the war and the peace but does not believe that socialism is the ultimate goal?"

By Robert Minor

If and when the coming convention of the Communist Party accepts the recommendation of the National Committee to change the name by dropping the word "party" and calling it a political association—this will remain the only political organization that represents and leads the struggle for socialism, and through the leadership of which the people will realize the aim of socialism.

Answers
to
Questions

It is because we are Marxists that we must place the first condition for membership in our Communist organization in the form that commits the new member to the action which is to be carried out. Deeds come before words. And in the white heat of war this is more urgently so than at any other time.

But the Party will not, in my opinion, have any difficulties arising from the purely imaginary situation of applicants who do not believe that socialism is the ultimate goal and who nevertheless wish to join the Communist Party. At any rate, the membership considers all applicants from the point of view of their honest character and their possession of that basic loyalty to the working class and labor movement which by its very logic brings them toward the socialist goal. People do not become Marxists through the logic of the trade union struggle in itself, but when good trade unionists wish to affiliate with the Communist movement in times like these, we need not doubt that they will rapidly assimilate its teaching.

I think the questioner (a Chicago comrade) does a service to the Party in placing the question as she does, saying "we will appreciate an early answer as it deeply affects our recruiting drive." Perhaps it will be useful to all comrades for the recruiting drive in all sections if we call attention again to the nature of the approach that we have been making for more than a year, in asking people to join the Party. Look again at the declaration that all new members are asked to make, as it is printed in the application blank. From this you will get the best picture of what is required of new members:

"1. Recognizing that my country is engaged in a just war, it

is my duty faithfully to serve and to encourage all others to serve in the armed forces, or in the industries or on the farms in all-out production for victory."

We begin, as you see, with the test of unreserved and active support of the war. This is right. It puts the test first in terms of action. Then:

"2. I will be a loyal and active member of the trade union of my industry, craft or profession, and will promote the unity of organized labor as the backbone of the democracy of our country, indispensable to its victory in this war of survival. I will promote the national unity of our country to win the war."

It is clear that the second requirement must be absolute loyalty to the labor movement and activity in it. The third requirement follows logically:

"3. I will promote the strongest unity of action of our country with its allies, the coalition of the United Nations headed by the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and China, and I will promote the unity of the trade unions of these and all countries as a necessary guarantee of the destruction of Nazism and fascism throughout the world and the preservation of our democracies."

The foregoing test which gives the main content of the Tehran policy and logically adds the indispensable struggle for trade union unity, is necessary as an assurance of effective support of our country in the war. Further:

"4. I will oppose all discrimination, hatred and prejudice within my union, within our country or among the nations, based upon differences of race, color, national origin or religious creed."

The Communist organization, as you see here, cannot admit to its membership anyone who does not meet this fourth requirement, fighting on behalf of the Negro people—and concretely this means now fighting for the elimination of the Jim Crow system—and against anti-Semitism, against all racial discrimination.

Finally, here is where your question is most definitely answered:

"5. I will study the program, the history and the theory of the Communist Party, and I will help the members of my trade union, my neighbors and the members of my church or fraternal society to understand the program and to join the Communist Party. I will read and support the press which supports my party; I will pay dues; I will belong to a Party branch; I will regularly and actively perform my patriotic duties as an American citizen in all the activities necessary to win this peoples' war of nation liberation."

You see that here the question of Party program, which is what you have in mind when you speak of belief in socialism, is placed in a manner adjusted to building the Communist Party under the conditions of American life of today.

Great masses of workers, the very best of the working class, are moving by millions into the labor movement, and many thousands are becoming willing, and in many cases eager, to find the explanation of the tremendous events of the time. That they come to the Communist organization is proof that they want to find their way forward. It would be utterly absurd for us to require of every worker applicant at this time an exact understanding of the laws of development of modern history, and therefore a fully developed belief in socialism. It would be sectarian and non-Marxist on our part.

We can ask of new applicants to membership in the Party only loyalty to the principles that are already comprehensive to all workers, devotion to the most basic duties of action today; plus a willingness and eagerness to study the program and the history and the theory which will make them thorough Communists. And above all a willingness to fight, to sacrifice in the war of mankind against Nazi enslavement is the first requirement for entering the Communist Party.

The next questions to be answered, in tomorrow's Daily Worker will be:

Questions asked by a 16-year-old boy about the meaning of the change in the Communist organization.



"A STAMP A DAY
FOR THE MAN
WHO IS AWAY"

