

**INTERNAL
INFORMATION BULLETIN**

APRIL 1969

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**PROBLEMS OF
LEADERSHIP SELECTION
AND
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**

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Socialist Workers Party
Internal Information Bulletin
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PROBLEMS OF LEADERSHIP SELECTION AND LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The immediate purpose of this information bulletin is to acquaint the comrades with a decision by the February 1969 plenum of the National Committee to modify the party's central leadership structure. The action involves a change in the composition of the Administrative Committee, which functions as a subordinate body of the Political Committee. The report to the plenum on this subject appears as the last item in the bulletin. Four additional items of background information also appear in the bulletin. They include a 1944 letter by Comrade Cannon on the selection of the National Committee; a report and discussion at the June 1962 plenum at which an advisory membership status was added to the N.C. structure; a report to the February 1966 plenum regarding a shift from a resident Political Committee to an elected P.C.; and a report to the May 1968 plenum on new administrative problems confronting the party. The background items are intended to help comrades get a general picture of the process through which the party has grappled with its leadership problems across the last 25 years. Toward that end the material is arranged in chronological order.

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COMMENTS ON THE SELECTION OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

[Editor's note: Written from Sandstone Prison in 1944 and adopted as the Nominating Commission procedure at the 1944 convention and all subsequent ones.]

In our opinion the most important reason for stretching the convention out for another day is to give adequate time for a free and well deliberated selection by the delegates of the new National Committee. This is one of the strongest guarantees of the democracy of the party. Our party has always been more democratic, ten times more democratic in this respect than any other party. But there is room for improvement, and we should consciously seek out the necessary methods. We never went in for any of the rigging, wangling, vote-trading and leadership pressure devices by which, in all other parties, the convention delegates are usually defrauded of a large part of their democratic freedom of choice. If one has a self-sufficient revolutionary party in mind, all such methods are self defeating. A revolutionary party needs a leadership that really represents the party, that is really one with the party. Without this democratic corrective, freely brought into play at every convention, centralization and discipline inevitably become caricatures and forms of abuse which injure the organization every time they are exercised. A revolutionary leadership must feel free at all times to act boldly and confidently in the name of the party. For that, it needs to be sure that there is no flaw in its mandate.

No rules exist to guide us in the technical execution of this difficult and delicate task to the best advantage of the party. The democratic selection of the primary and secondary leaders is a sufficiently important question -- nobody knows how much damage can be done by bungling it -- but, as far as I know, nobody has ever written anything about it. Nobody has taught us anything. We are obliged to think and experiment for ourselves.

The democratic impulses of the rank and file incline them to react unfavorably to "slates," as they feel, not without reason, that they narrow down, for all practical purposes, the freedom of choice. The social democratic politicians, who are as undemocratic a collection of rascals as one can ever expect to meet, have always exploited this sentiment by announcing their firm, democratic opposition to slates. Of course, there was a little catch to their virtuous slogan of "no slates." They meant no openly-avowed slates which would possibly be open to discussion and amendment. Instead of that, the noble social democrats rig up

secret slates by means of horse-trades and petty bribes to ensure their control. A good 50% of social democratic convention "politics" is always devoted to this kind of business.

From the first days of American communism, which also coincided with the first appearance on the scene of a new type of leaders with a new conception of "politics," we tried to break through the "no slate" fraud and devise a more honest system by which the leaders would take open responsibility for their proposals and give reasons for their preferences in the make-up of the leading committee. It became rather common practice for the leading committees, in national as well as local conventions in the communist movement, to propose a slate of candidates for the new committee to be elected. We carried the practice with us in the independent movement of Trotskyism. (During factional struggles the slate-making arrangements were carried on in the separate caucuses of the factions.) This method was, without doubt, far superior to the "no-slate" tricks of our socialist predecessors, being more honest, and in the essence of the matter, even more democratic.

But this system, also, was not free from negative aspects, and even dangers. I perceived some of them long ago, have thought much about the matter, and from time to time have tried to devise corrective experiments. What impressed me most of all was the quite obvious fact that while the presentation of a slate of candidates by the leadership is the most "efficient" way to get through the business of the election of the N.C. -- usually the last point on the agenda, carried through in a great hurry -- it concentrates too much power in the leadership just at that very point -- the convention -- where the democratic corrective of rank and file control should be asserted most strongly. It is not the election of the central, most prominent and influential leaders themselves. That problem solves itself almost automatically in the interplay of party work and internal strife. The problem arises over the selection of the secondary leaders, the new committee members, the potential leaders of the future. As a rule, this part of the slate, if presented by the most authoritative central leaders, is accepted whether enthusiastically or not, by the convention; many delegates are reluctant to oppose them.

It is senseless, of course, to speak

of a revolutionary combat party without recognizing the necessity of a centralized, full-empowered leadership. But this states only one-half of the problem. Leninist centralism is democratic centralism, a profoundly dialectical concept. The other half of the Leninist formula recognizes no less the necessity of subordinating the leadership, really as well as formally, to the party; keeping it under the control of the party. The party constitution does everything that can be done in a formal sense to provide for the interaction of centralism and democracy. The structure of the party is strictly hierarchical. Higher committees command the lower. Full authority over all is vested in the National Committee. But the N.C., like all other committees, is required to render accounts and surrender its mandate at stated intervals to the party convention to which it is subordinated. This is the formal, constitutional guarantee both for centralization and the ultimate control of the leadership. But it is also necessary to think about the spirit as well as the letter of the party constitution. A far-sighted leadership should concern itself with the elusive, intangible factors which can play such a great role in determining the actual relationship between the N.C. and the ranks.

Some of these factors arise from the composition of the N.C. and the division of functions within it. Nominally, this body consists of 25 members, and they all have equal rights. In addition there are 15 alternates. But the majority come to the center only for meetings of the plenum, which are not held very often. Between plenums the power is delegated to the Political Committee. From this it is quite clear that one section of the National Committee is in a position to exert far more influence on the day-to-day work and interpretation of party policy than the other. Again, some are older, more experienced and more prominent than others, and consequently, wield greater authority in the committee, as well as in the party as a whole. On the other side, the committee members from the districts and the younger members of the committee generally, who are active in local work, are closer to the rank and file than the central leaders of the party are, and represent them more directly and intimately. This gives them a special function in the N.C. of extraordinary importance. Their presence represents a form of continuing rank and file control and supervision over the central leaders. They can fulfill this function, however, only insofar as they are people of independent influence and popularity in their own localities; only insofar as they are freely elected on their own merits, not hand picked.

To be sure, the central leaders cannot be indifferent to the selection of the secondary leadership. In this, as in

everything else, leaders must lead. In a certain sense, the central party leaders "select" their collaborators and eventual successors. The question is, how to go about it? It is often easy for politically experienced leaders to convince themselves that they are better judges of the qualifications and potentialities of certain candidates than the rank and file delegates. And, as a rule, it is not too difficult to force their selections through by means of the "slate." This may appear to be the most "efficient" way. But, in my opinion, there is a better way.

Wisdom lies in "selecting" people who have popularity and influence in their own right, and whose promotion coincides with the wishes of the party members who know them best. That means, to select people who are advancing under their own power.

I came to this conclusion a long time ago, and as far as I have been able to influence the course of things, it has been the party method of selecting the N.C. Extensive and varied experiences, with every imaginable kind of experiment, has convinced me that this method, even at the cost of incidental mistakes, works out best in the long run.

The central leaders of the party, who work from day to day without close contact with the internal life of the branches, need such a constitution of the N.C. if they are to lead the party confidently; lead it with the assurance that they know the moods and sentiments of the ranks and are in step with them. When doubt arises, or when some new important step is under consideration, it is only necessary to consult the out-of-town members of the N.C. by mail, or to call a plenum, in order to get a reliable sounding of the party. Approval of a given course by the plenum is a pretty certain forecast of similar action by the party. Conversely, when the plenum finds it necessary to over-rule the Political Committee -- and this has happened more than once, notably in 1938-39 -- it is a sign that the Political Committee is out of line with the party and requires a change in its composition. The 1938-39 National Committee rebuked the P.C. several times and finally reorganized it, and later tests showed that the full plenum most accurately reflected the sentiment of the party. A serious and conscientious party leadership should deliberately aim at a National Committee so composed as to be, in effect, a microcosm of the party. When the full plenum of such a National Committee meets between conventions, to all intents and purposes the party is there in the room. That is far more useful to responsible political leaders than a roomful of hand-picked supporters without independent influence and authority. Bureaucrats who have special interests of their own to defend against the rank and file need to

surround themselves with dependent henchmen, but revolutionary political leaders need support of an entirely different kind, the support of people who really represent the rank and file of the party.

There is another, and even more important, reason why the rank and file convention delegates should take over the election of the National Committee and be free from undue pressure and influence on the part of the national political leadership in exercising this function. The free selection of the full membership of the National Committee is perhaps the most decisive way to strengthen and reinforce genuine party democracy. It puts the political leaders under the direct supervision and control of a second line of leaders who are in intimate daily contact with the local and district organizations and, in fact, represent them in the plenum. This control does not have to be exercised every day to be effective. The fact that it's there, and can be demonstrated when necessary, is what counts. Strange to relate, the professional democrats have never once in the history of our party bothered their heads about the method of selecting the National Committee from the standpoint of reinforcing party democracy. This, in my opinion, is because they tend to think of democracy almost exclusively in terms of unlimited and unrestricted self-expression, and forget that control of the central leadership, which in day-to-day practice is limited to a very small group, by a larger group standing closer to the rank and file, is the most important mechanism to assure the democratic half of the Leninist formula: democratic centralism.

Throwing the floor open for nominations on the last day of the convention is not the only alternative to a slate presented by the outgoing N.C. That only throws the delegate body into disorganized confusion and facilitates the manipulation of the election by means of secret slates and horse trades, the favorite method of social democratic pseudo-democrats.

There is no infallible formula, but the results of our experiments over a period of many years argue most convincingly in favor of a slate prepared by a nominating commission. Of course, there are nominating commissions and nominating commissions. But the best, that is, the most democratic, is not the nominating commission appointed by the outgoing N.C. nor the one elected at random from the floor of the convention. The most efficient, for the purposes set forth above, is the nominating commission selected by the branch or district delegations on a roughly proportional basis -- each delegation selecting its own representatives -- and then ratified by the convention. The nominating commission, thus conceived, is a body actually representing the rank and

file delegations from the districts. It would be grossly improper for individual central leaders to intrude themselves upon the commission and seek to dominate its proceedings. That would amount to a circumvention of the democratic process aimed at in the proposal. It is the part of wisdom for the central leaders to leave the nominating commission to its own devices, respecting the essence of party democracy as well as the form.

The nominating commission should be selected on the first day of the convention; it should begin its sessions at once, and meet at least once a day thereafter to consider the various nominations, until a slate is decided upon for presentation to the convention when the election of the N.C. comes up on the agenda. In my opinion, the first step of the commission at the 1944 convention should be to discard formally the ruling which paralyzed the work of the nominating commission at the 1942 convention -- the utterly stupid and reactionary principle that every member of the outgoing N.C. was, as a matter of course, to be reelected unless good cause was shown to remove him. That turns things upside down. Nobody can be "frozen" in any position in a revolutionary party. He must stand for election at each convention and the election must be free and open. Room must be left for competition and rivalry and differences of opinion to operate without artificial restraints. Members of the outgoing N.C. should be placed in exactly the same status as new aspirants -- as candidates for election. The nominating commission should adopt a rule to this effect at its first session.

The most practical next step is to take a preliminary poll to ascertain how many candidates are generally favored for election as national leaders who are not counted as representatives of any special district of the party. This will clear the road for the apportionment of the remaining places on the slate for local and district representatives. Here, again, there should be no "freezing" of old representation and no automatic closing of the door to new candidates from districts previously not represented. The object should be to provide the fairest possible representation of the districts in the new N.C. but the principle of proportional representation should be modified by other considerations; the relative importance of the district; the quality of the candidates; the special role played by certain candidates, etc.

The commission should announce the time and place of its daily sessions, and invite any delegate who wishes to argue for or against any candidate to appear and take the floor. The slate finally decided upon, either by agreement or majority vote, should be presented to the conven-

tion as the nominations of the commission. That leaves the floor open for other nominations and free discussion before the ballot is taken. Naturally one would have to have some good arguments for another candidate to hope to amend the slate of the nominating commission. But if he thinks he has a strong case, there is no reason why he shouldn't make the attempt. Adequate time and patience must be accorded for the presentation of any such proposed amendments. The heavens will not fall if a slate is amended once in a while.

One word more. The convention should not shunt the election of the new N.C. off till the last hurried half-hour of the convention, when impatience of departing delegations would tend to discourage full discussion and ample consideration of the various nominations. The best procedure would be to fix a definite hour and day to take up the election of the N.C. whether the rest of the agenda is finished or not at that time. This decision should be made demonstratively in order to call sharp attention to the vital importance of full and careful deliberation in selecting the party leadership. And even more important, the convention will thus give itself time to

do the job right.

All these measures will not guarantee the election of an ideal National Committee. But they should help to provide us with the best Committee that a free party can select from the material at hand by the method of party democracy. If the returning delegates go home with the feeling that this has been accomplished, the new N.C. will be able to begin its work with a strong authority. On the other hand, the leadership, precisely because of the care and deliberation taken in the selection of the personnel of the N.C., will feel itself to be more than ever under the watchful supervision and control of the party.

October, 1944

Note: If my remarks are sent abroad a postscript should be added to the effect that they are designed for the method of selecting the N.C. in our party, as it is today, at the given stage of its development, and are not meant as a universal formula. Every party must work out its own methods on the basis of its own experiences.

POLITICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON NATIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTION

(June 1962 Plenum of National Committee)

Comrades, in discussing the National Committee question today we deal with a general problem that has become increasingly urgent for the party. We are carrying through on a specific assurance that was given to the last convention of the party that the incoming National Committee would go to work on this question and try to have a solution worked out as quickly as possible.

Comrades present here who participated in the nominating commission at the last convention will recall that an unusual thing occurred. Comrade Cannon, Comrade Stein and myself appeared before the nominating commission after they had been at their labors for a couple of days. We told them that we were wholly aware of the problem they were grappling with. They wanted to bring some younger comrades onto the National Committee but did not have any room to do so, unless the already large National Committee were expanded even further, which would be no solution to the problem at all. We assured the comrades that the central leadership of the party would take the initiative in trying to arrive at recommended lines of readjustment that would be calculated to make certain that the nominating commission at the next convention would not be confronted with the same problem.

Those of you who were in attendance at the last convention will recall that, before the report of the nominating commission was brought in on the last day of the gathering, Comrade Cannon addressed the convention on this subject and assured the comrades in the name of the central leadership and the incoming National Committee that we would go to work on the problem.

Now I say that this was an unusual action for Comrade Cannon, Comrade Stein and myself to appear before the nominating commission. I want to call to the attention of the younger comrades a bit of the background about the nominating commission. If memory serves me right, Murry, wasn't it at the 1941 combined plenum and active workers conference that you and I were co-chairmen of what was a sort of anticipation of the nominating commission as we know it today? [Murry: Yes.]

That was an occasion where a great chunk of the top leadership of the party had been included among the comrades indicted under the Smith Act in the summer of 1941. We were going to trial in the fall and being practical, hard-headed tacticians we didn't proceed on the most favorable variant. We proceeded on the possibility that the judge might send us

right from the courtroom to the pokey. So between the indictment and the trial we called a special party gathering to take measures to provide for a substitute leadership and modify the committee accordingly.

It's not an accident that I'm going back to this 1941 event because it bears on the need to be flexible -- within the framework of carefully established and well motivated basic lines of procedure -- in grappling with the present leadership problem in the party. We organized what was termed a combined plenum and active workers conference. The gathering comprised members of the National Committee and delegations of leading activists from the various party branches. In this way we expanded the National Committee, on an ad hoc basis, in order to meet the emergency leadership problem we anticipated because of the Smith Act trial. Although the judge didn't send us to jail right away from the courtroom we did have to go to prison at the end of 1943, so there was merely a delay in the need for emergency leadership arrangements.

In a sense there's a similarity in some features of this gathering. Grappling with a new problem, this plenum takes a form which is a little unusual. That circumstance is both a symbol of the unusualness of the problem we face and an indication of our attempt to be flexible -- while we carefully follow established lines of basic procedure -- in seeking a solution.

But returning for the moment to 1941, it was on that occasion that the adumbration of the nominating commission idea appeared and it became further developed in the ensuing period. Then, while we were in prison, Comrade Cannon wrote several letters to the party dealing more basically with this question, and at the 1944 party convention the nominating commission mechanism for the selection of the National Committee as we have come to know it took full form.

I recommend to the younger comrades that you go back to the internal discussion material of that period and read particularly the letters on this subject that were addressed to the party by Comrade Cannon from prison. You'll find this material very rich, very fruitful in probing some of the basic aspects of the problem of leadership and the manner of handling the leadership problem. A key factor to note is the synthesis between permitting genuine democracy in selecting the leadership and the duty of the leadership to give guidance to the cadre on the lead-

ership problem at critical moments in the life of the party.

Although undertaking broad guidance on the matter, it has not been the practice of the central leadership to intervene in a direct sense, as occurred at the last convention, in the work of the nominating commission. It was done then only because we had a special problem, only because we were just entering a new stage in dealing in a flexible and yet objective way with a special problem that confronted the party. That problem, as you know, is to infuse younger blood into the leadership at a more rapid rate than we have been able to attain in recent years.

This question has to be taken with extreme seriousness. When we talk about the National Committee of our party we are talking about the highest form of continuity in revolutionary class consciousness between past, present and future. We are talking about a leading cadre which, as a living force, dates back to participation in class struggles at the turn of the century. Its task is to help assimilate into the leadership younger comrades who are going to play a comparable role in coming class struggles which we anticipate will appear in a new magnitude and scope and on a far higher plane in the period ahead.

We face the problem of extending the leadership continuity to younger comrades, interlinked with the more experienced cadre leaders, so that we provide the bridge of historic consciousness to the working class and its allies and also so that we may most actively intervene in the objective political processes and work to thrust these developments in the direction of a socialist revolution. That means we should pause for a moment and, if I can use the title of one of Comrade Warde's pamphlets, take the long view of history, take ourselves up out of the immediate and the particular; leave aside the smaller questions, the secondary aspects; and think for a moment about what the leading cadre of this party represents and what it has to be; realize how very careful we have to be to do the necessary things and yet to do them in a right way when we deal with the leadership question.

I would say that the present National Committee of our party can be described as being composed of four general layers. First, that category of comrades who are the founding leaders of our movement, who took the initiative in establishing American Trotskyism. The second, a layer of comrades who came to our movement as radicalized youth of the thirties, workers and students reacting to the dynamic class struggles of that period. A third layer made up of comrades who came into the cadre during the early 40's under the impact of the second world war and the labor upsurge that occurred in the imme-

diately aftermath of the war. The fourth layer, a very thin one, of comrades who came into the cadre during the latter 40's and early 50's under conditions of the cold war and witch hunt.

Now I have to stop. I can't give you the fifth layer, covering the latter part of the 50's and the beginning of the 60's because that's where the biggest hole is. That's part of the problem we're talking about.

What does this leading cadre represent? I have said that this cadre plays the key role, this leading cadre, plays the key role in fulfilling the party's function as the bridge in historic consciousness for the working class and its allies. What in more specific terms does this cadre represent from that point of view?

There are comrades in our leading cadre who were participants -- and if not in a primary, at least in a secondary capacity leaders -- in some of the great struggles of the IWW back in the early part of the century. They are comrades who participated in the socialist movement in the great days of Debs. They are comrades who learned to fight against imperialist war in this country, under wartime conditions, back in the first world war. They are comrades who -- already richly endowed with class struggle experience, already possessing a significant degree of Marxist education -- could and did play various leading roles in helping to form the Communist Party of the United States under the impact of the Russian Revolution.

They are comrades who didn't hesitate to break with Stalinism in the Communist Party movement as it had developed by the latter part of the 20's and -- true to their dedication to the movement when they entered as youth to fight for truth -- they faced isolation in support of truth on Trotsky's side in the historic conflict with Stalin, and went on from there to found our movement, the SWP.

Not long after the break with the CP they began to get some reinforcements, which must have made them feel about like the older comrades feel today about the young people who have been coming in our direction the last few years. These reinforcements they welcomed at that time were the young radicalized workers and students of the 30's who came toward our cadre. In those days the party functioned under adverse circumstances as a small propaganda group more or less isolated from the mass movement and up against a vastly stronger Communist Party that viciously persecuted the Trotskyists. Yet to the very best of their ability our comrades sought to intervene among leftward-moving workers and students, working

persistently to build a strong revolutionary socialist cadre that would know how to fight Stalinism without capitulating to imperialism and how to fight imperialism without capitulating to Stalinism. Comrade Cannon describes this period graphically in The History of American Trotskyism.

Then came the second world war and with it the death of Trotsky. Something else happened that isn't so well known, or at least isn't often thought of, and in view of the discussion we've been having about the world movement, it's a matter that's worth keeping in mind. When the second world war came the battle lines of the opposing imperialist forces drew a line of fire across the world, isolating Trotskyist cadres from one another. The comrades on either side had little or no contact back and forth. Don't forget this happened coincident with the death of Trotsky, the founding leader of the world party.

Now it is not well known, and if known not often remembered, that our leading cadre, and before all others the founding leaders, played a big role during those times in doing the necessary and possible to preserve the continuity of the historic threads of the world Trotskyist movement. Ours was the leadership that in the aftermath of war responded to every opportunity to recement the world cadres on the most effective possible basis. And for many years this fraternal effort on our part has since had to be undertaken under conditions of the cold war and the witch hunt.

Meanwhile the earlier leading cadre -- the founding leaders and the comrades of the 30's -- became reinforced by comrades who came into the party during the early 40's and in time rose to leading positions. That leadership with some limited reinforcement from comrades subsequently recruited and developed as leaders, has had the task of holding the cadre together, maintaining its viability, preserving its theoretical and programmatic integrity across the long, long, 16-year period of isolation from 1946 to the present.

We're not as big as we were in 1946. But what does the balance sheet show? The fundamental balance sheet is remarkable, not for what we lost across those 16 years, but for what we held. Not for the disabilities that in one way or another occurred among us, but for the viability that we preserved across that whole period. That's the key meaning of the balance sheet.

Look at it another way. How does our cadre stand with relation to opponent tendencies? The social democrats have lost any real capacity -- if we're on the

ball -- to seize leadership among newly radicalizing elements. The Stalinists are a hollow shell of what they were. The CP is crisis-ridden, bankrupt in program, stripped of any really effective use of the monolithic, bureaucratic rule of the hacks over their cadres. Stalinism today, like the social democracy, has to confront us everywhere on the test of viability of program and capability of leadership.

If we keep our wits about us, if we keep the large view of things, if we think and if we act consciously and deliberately, we've got every reason in the world to be confident that we can deal them hammer blows. We've got every reason to be confident that right here in this room is gathered a representative nucleus of what -- in the continuity of revolutionary leadership -- is destined to be the leadership of the revolution that the American working class is destined to carry out against the imperialist monster in this country. And when you draw the balance sheet from that point of view there's a lot to be said for us that is positive.

Now what I've described, or sought to describe at least, is an objective process which has unfolded across an extensive period of time. I've been describing a process in which comrades who are leading members of our party today were active participants in revolutionary struggles that encompass a span of a little over half a century. That's what gives rise to our difficulty.

Some of the comrades are coming into the autumn of their lives. Comrades who have had a long and honorable and productive record of active leadership in the party are not able to be as active as they once were. This circumstance has begun to generate a situation within our cadre in which we are falling a bit off balance in the basic concept of a revolutionary leadership as one that leads in action. This has been developing for some time but during the political doldrums of recent years the problem didn't thrust itself upon the cadre as forcefully as it has lately. One of our key problems during adverse times has been to preserve the integrity of the party program. One of our problems has been to fight off attempts to derail the cadre in its fundamental outlook in a search for some slick way to overleap adverse objective conditions. As you know this sometimes led to splits.

Under these conditions the role of the older, most experienced comrades, who had so much to contribute even though they couldn't be as active as they once were, offset the circumstance that the leadership was beginning to fall out of gear with the concept of a leadership that leads in action.

But now, as this whole plenum has shown in our discussion of all the main points, we have come to a period which we can characterize generally as follows: While our task still remains primarily propagandistic, we are finding increasing opportunities to engage in political activity and more of a premium must be placed on political activists.

Now what does this gathering represent concerning that aspect of the problem? You will recall that I previously noted a certain parallel between this gathering and the combined plenum and active workers conference of 1941. Let me cite just one special aspect of this plenum that I think will illustrate the point.

There are present here organizers from several party branches who are not members of the National Committee. There are two or three other organizers in that same category who were invited but could not be present. Now that symbolizes the problem. Branch organizers are only one category among the various party functions through which the testing of leadership capacity in the eyes of the cadre takes place with regard to selection of the National Committee, but they represent an important category. Also it is true that in selecting our National Committee we don't use as a main criterion any concept of geographic representation. Yet in the nature of things it usually turns out that either a branch organizer is a National Committee member or a branch organizer is a comrade who shows promise of such leadership capacity.

From this viewpoint what is striking about the present situation is the number of branch organizers who are not members of the National Committee. It indicates the gap that has developed with respect to the concept of a leading committee that leads in action. And our problem is to find a way to open the door for younger activists to come onto the National Committee.

We can't meet that need by enlarging the committee out of all proportion, so we also have another problem. We would be unwise not to make a realistic provision whereby the younger activists on the National Committee can have the benefit of the experience and the wisdom of older, less active comrades who have been in the battle a long time and have learned a lot and have got a lot that they can give to help the younger leaders. We must not disadvantage the cadre from this point of view in trying to solve the problem of increasing the action component of the leading committee. We've got to find a synthesis of these two problems, these two needs.

Since the convention we've talked in-

formally in the central leadership about this problem, and across a period of time evolved a concept which, for want of a better term, we have come to characterize as an advisory membership status. After considerable informal discussion the Political Committee decided to make some formal recommendations concerning advisory membership which I will present to you in terminating this report.

We believe that the plenum is entirely justified in **taking** this action, that it remains within the basic framework of party constitutional provisions. Although an unusual step it is justified as a self action by the National Committee to meet an unusual problem. It constitutes an interim adjustment of the leadership structure as a provisional step toward preparing for the next convention to make headway in solving the problems of transition in our leadership.

The P.C. motion is contained in the minutes of June 6. These minutes were distributed only to the National Committee members. So I will read the Political Committee motion to the body as a whole:

"(1) National Committee members not able to be active may withdraw from regular membership and assume advisory membership status.

"(2) As advisory members they will receive committee material and will be entitled to participate in committee proceedings with voice but without vote.

"(3) The P.C. is authorized to arrange this change in status to advisory membership upon request by N.C. members.

"(4) When an N.C. member changes from regular to advisory membership the vacancy on the regular committee shall be filled by the comrade highest on the alternate list.

"(5) Vacancies created on the alternate list shall remain open until the next party convention."

The motion, as I have read it to you, is submitted to the plenum by the unanimous action of the Political Committee and its adoption by the plenum is, of course, recommended.

Now in closing I wish to read a letter addressed to the plenum by Comrade H. Adams, dated June 11.

"National Committee Plenum:

"Dear Comrades: For the past several weeks I have been trying to compose a letter to propose an action to the plenum. Today I received the minutes of P.C. meeting No. 12, June 6, 1962, and I find I can forego my efforts towards this letter.

Instead, I want to endorse and approve the P.C. proposal on advisory membership and be so recorded.

"I am confident the plenum will

establish the membership status anticipated and wish to submit my application to such status. Due to continued adverse personal conditions, I am unable to be present."

Plenum Discussion of National Committee Question

Kirk: I would like to ask a question of Comrade Dobbs. Have you considered making a provision for the P.C. status of any such advisory member who may apply at the time they are on the P.C.?

Dobbs: The provision that advisory members are entitled to participate in committee proceedings means the National Committee and its subordinate body, the P.C., in the same generalized sense that it's dealt with in the constitution.

Edwards: Does this apply to alternate members?

Dobbs: It would be meaningless for alternate members because advisory membership gives the regular members who assume that status exactly what is essential to the status of alternate members, that is, they receive committee material and participate in meetings with voice but without vote.

Alvin: What would be the status of advisory members at the time of the next convention? In your mind, would they just continue until the convention has to elect them?

Dobbs: The advisory membership provision itself would have to be authorized by the convention and formalized in a constitutional manner. When we present the recommendations on advisory membership at this stage, the National Committee is taking a self-action that, as I pointed out before, doesn't abrogate the essence of the constitution but at the same time is a provision that will have to be formalized by the convention.

Part of the problem of the leadership between now and the convention is to prepare specific recommendations for the convention. I would say that assuming, as I think we can justifiably assume, that the convention will concur in this arrangement it does not follow that anyone who assumes advisory membership status before the convention will be automatically continued in that capacity. That's something the convention itself will decide.

It doesn't follow from a provision for advisory membership that anybody who is on the committee in whatever capacity is guaranteed a life-time association with the committee by the automatic device of graduating to advisory membership status. The convention itself will decide who

should simply be dropped from the committee and who should be continued on in an advisory status. The cadre, I think it can be reasonably be assumed, will decide this question in the same basic sense that it decides who should be regular members of the National Committee and who should be alternate members.

Winnick: Comrades, Farrell's excellent and serious summary of the history of our leadership can only be beneficial to those comrades who are here and not completely familiar with some of its history. It serves a very salutary purpose.

I believe, however, that section five of the motion which reads that vacancies created on the alternate list shall remain open until the next party convention may have the effect of defeating precisely the objectives that Farrell indicated.

If the purpose of the revision now being proposed is to create an infusion of the activists that Farrell described, paragraph five obviously bars this -- because the process as it would unfold would be that we would have the present alternate members who are active in the National Committee in any event and participating in its deliberations, but we would then have this vacuum created on the bottom. Therefore, we would be depriving ourselves of the benefit of the advice and recommendations and experience of some of the activists.

I would therefore like to inquire whether it is possible to work out some procedure whereby, upon the initiation of the advisory status for some of the comrades, some way could be created of filling the gap in the alternate list, so that we would avail ourselves directly of the contributions that could be made by comrades who have been designated by Farrell as the active component.

Chairman: There is no provision on the agenda for a summary. What is your pleasure: to have the reporter answer questions as they are raised, or to have a summary.

Motion: To have them answered as raised. Carried.

Dobbs: On Bill's question, would there be a vacuum? There would be a vacuum in a formal sense. We wouldn't have a full list of 20 alternates as provided

by the constitution insofar as alternates step up to regular membership when comrades who are now regular members voluntarily assume advisory member status. But that is just from the point of view of form alone. It is simply a shift in form and not the creation of a vacuum from the point of view of the total committee content as established by the convention. All the comrades who were elected to the National Committee by the convention -- in the form of either regular membership or alternate membership -- remain in the National Committee as an entity. There will simply be a shift in the formal status from two categories to three: advisory membership, regular membership, and alternate membership.

So even from the aspect of pure form the seeming vacuum, as you call it, on the alternate list is more superficial than real. But that's not the most important part of the question. I indicated in my report on this question that at the 1941 session on leadership we actually coopted. Why did we coopt? First, what were we doing when we coopted? We were actually establishing de facto committee status for comrades who had not previously been elected to the committee through formal, constitutional convention action. That's what we were doing then. And if we tried to fill any gaps in the alternates' list by similar means in the present situation, that's what we would be doing now.

Why did we coopt in 1941, and why do we not propose to coopt now? In 1941 the loose counterpart of what we're contemplating here as comrades who would still participate as advisory members were not in that position at all -- they were on their way to prison. There was no basis to assume they would continue to receive committee material and continue to participate in committee proceedings with voice but without vote because they were about to be removed from direct contact. So there was a hole punched in the leadership in the most real and complete sense.

In those emergency conditions we had to act as best we could short of a formal party convention. Let me stress that it would not have been physically possible under those circumstances to call a formal party convention, so we resorted to the provisional device of a combined plenum and active workers conference instead. Don't forget that we were engaged in a knockdown dragout fight on the streets of Minneapolis, battling Tobin's goons in a showdown fight in the Teamsters Union, and in the midst of this struggle Roosevelt had thrown a grand jury indictment at the top leadership of the party and the union under the Smith Act. We had only limited time before the Smith Act trial in which to make emergency preparations in order to preserve the leadership function in the party under these adverse conditions.

We, therefore, had no alternative but to coopt. There was nothing formal about it at all, nothing formal in the sense that we were following some kind of abstract law about avoiding formal vacuums.

So it would be absolutely artificial, from the point of view of necessity in the cadre, for us to contemplate filling any present vacuum in the alternate list on a makeshift basis. It would be artificial both because you don't have the hole in the leadership that was created by the problem of the 1941 Smith Act trial, and you don't have a similar urgent necessity to fill the alternates' list on an ad hoc basis through cooptation.

To coopt now, in the judgment of the leading comrades, would be to take an action that would in fact -- without any real justification -- prejudice deliberations of the nominating commission and the decision of the next convention concerning the election of the National Committee. It would unnecessarily cut across the democratic, carefully thought out, tested way in which the party has learned to proceed on this question. That is why we propose to leave open until the convention any vacancies on the alternate list that may result from regular N.C. members assuming advisory status.

Another question is, if the status of advisory members is so identical with that of alternates, wouldn't this arrangement in view of the present designation to the P.C. of regular N.C. members prevent participation on a regular basis?

Well, here again I think it's a question of looking at it from the point of view of the essence rather than the form. When I made reference to the circumstance that an advisory member would in fact have a relationship in the National Committee identical with that of an N.C. alternate, I was simply trying to indicate that there is no point in an N.C. alternate contemplating advisory membership status. But it does not follow that you can just turn that around and say that, since his form of participation is identical with that of an alternate, an advisory member would have the same status with respect to the P.C. function as an alternate. Here again it is a question of flexibility. An alternate under our present provision, where the P.C. is composed of the regular N.C. members, does not become a formal part of the P.C., does not necessarily participate in its meetings, because he is not yet a full member of the National Committee.

In the case of an advisory member that paragraph in the P.C. motion providing that the advisory member will be entitled to participate in committee proceedings with voice but without vote is intended to mean that such comrades may still participate in the P.C. sessions but

they will no longer have a vote. At the same time where advisory membership status is voluntarily taken by regular members of the National Committee between now and the convention, comrades on the alternate list, in the order of their priority as determined at the last convention, become full voting members of the National Committee, and if resident at the center, of the P.C.

Boulton: Since the advisory membership status must begin with a request from the elected National Committee member himself, would a contrary initiative to subsequently remove a comrade from advisory membership require the unanimous consent of the National Committee members?

Dobbs: Where a comrade voluntarily assumes advisory membership at this stage, we don't contemplate any removal from such position other than that which constitutionally applies concerning all N.C. members between conventions. The only point I was trying to make about what would ultimately happen to advisory membership status is that it will be determined by the convention. It is within the power of the convention to make any decisions it may choose concerning advisory memberships. If I may hazard an estimate, it is my belief that the convention will ratify and continue both the advisory committee structure and such advisory memberships as may be established before the convention. That is my personal belief, my educated guess, without a college education, that this is about the way it will work out.

The point I also wanted to make was that the convention has the right not to do that if it so decides. Moreover, in thinking about this problem as leaders, which is the way we have to think in a gathering like this, we must not fall into any mechanical posture of assuming that anybody who makes the alternate list is assured of advancement to regular membership and ultimate graduation to advisory membership status. In other words, just because we establish an advisory membership status it doesn't mean that anybody's guaranteed a lifetime N.C. membership in one or another form, like Ryan serving as president of the ILA.

Dunne: Comrade chairman, I would like to suggest a little clarification here that may possibly help since the party is going to be talking about this question between now and the convention. What you're trying here is not to set up a formal body that's going to be an upper house advising the National Committee. We do not contemplate a club of old timers who will get together and collectively take a position in the deliberations of the National Committee under the proposed change in its form. At one time as we thought these questions over it was suggested that there should be an advisory collective group established, but we don't think that's a very good idea at all.

I don't think there's going to be any difficulty about this. However, the convention will decide. And that's one of the tests of the new and what we think will be perhaps an improved leadership in time. They can change these things by going to the comrades of the party at the convention and laying before them their decision. The convention will adopt it, or amend it, or do something else. That's the only way.

We have 19 alternates right now. I do not believe, and it's hardly possible, that there are going to be 19 requests for advisory status. We're not crippling the party. We're simply making preparations for the next convention to be able to do what we think it will want to do.

Dobbs: On the question of the relationship of advisory members to the N.C., Ray has put it exactly right and in doing so he has given you part of the history of our earlier discussion. As he said, in our thinking about the question since the last convention, various suggestions have been made as we wrestled with the problem. After a time we came to what I think can now be said to be the unanimous opinion of the leading comrades that in their formal relationship with the N.C. the advisory members should not constitute a collective body. Each advisory member should stand in an individual relationship to the N.C. as a whole within its changed form, just as they now stand as regular members of the committee. Otherwise we would have what amounts to a bi-cameral committee. That would create problems for us, because to lead in action it's necessary to be able to decide, there's got to be a central authority. And it can't be a dual authority. That would contradict what is symbolized by the fact that the advisory member gives up his vote.

Now the advisory member in giving up his vote at this time acts voluntarily thereby opening the way formally for the plenum to change the N.C. structure without violating the party constitution. Simultaneously the fact that he assumes advisory member status, while giving up his vote on the regular committee, signifies that he will continue to do all he can to help think out party problems and promote party-building work. In short, the advisory membership arrangement helps open the way for younger comrades to come forward in the leadership without causing an untoward rupture in leadership continuity.

Murry: Farrell has indicated that this procedure is unusual in the history of our party, while it is not a new thought. At the last convention and years before that different aspects of the problem of bringing younger strata into the leadership were discussed and I don't want to give the impression that any of us in the party leadership that are working on the

problem have foreseen every aspect of the development. In the light of a long lag of necessary steps by the party in the field of leadership, and the renewal of leadership, the big thing in mind is that this plenum is taking an important step forward, is catching up.

But there are many wide open problems. And Comrade Winnick has raised questions which I don't pretend to have thought out. I know Farrell's working on the entire problem quite thoroughly. It leaves all kinds of questions, the renewal of alternates, the problem of how the commission will work, and all that. I've got the feeling that we've got to be considerably critical of our own tardiness on many questions, theoretical, programmatic, tactical in this most important depart-

ment. I think we're catching up. In Comrade Breitman's presentation on the key question of all American theory, politics and tactics, he very gently points out that he opened the discussion but the party leadership or even the ranks didn't to any great extent respond to the problem and its urgency -- but here I think the leadership is leading in tackling this problem as outlined by Comrade Farrell. We'll think about it, and work on it, and begin to find a greater relationship between the tempos required and the audacity and energy required, and the problem of the party, its leadership, its theory, its politics. That's the great step forward, outlined by this proposal and presentation.

Motion: To accept report. Carried.

BY FARRELL DOBBS

A SHIFT FROM A RESIDENT TO AN ELECTED POLITICAL COMMITTEE

(Report to February 1966 Plenum of National Committee)

Comrades, at the post-convention plenum it was reported that the comrades here at the center are strongly desirous of passing from the present form of the resident Political Committee to an elected Political Committee. We considered the matter urgent enough to contemplate taking the step at the post-convention plenum, but on further reflection we decided that -- since there was going to be another plenum in another six months -- we would wait until this gathering in order to give everybody a better opportunity to reflect on the problem before action was taken.

The outgoing Political Committee has specific recommendations on an elected Political Committee to submit to this plenum. Before presenting those recommendations, on behalf of the outgoing committee, I would like to review briefly some of the background of the problem.

To begin with, it is important to distinguish between the nature of the Political Committee's leadership function and the matter of its organizational form. The leadership function of the committee can be described more or less as a constant factor in this sense: The Political Committee is a subordinate body of the National Committee. It is created by the National Committee for the purpose of carrying on the central leadership functions on a workaday basis between plenums of the National Committee. In carrying out those functions, the Political Committee at all times remains responsible to and under the control of the National Committee. In no sense does it have any superseding authority. In all respects it is subordinate to the National Committee. These considerations can be viewed, thinking of our problem today, as a more or less constant factor in the leadership pattern.

It is a different matter when we come to the question of organizational forms in the creation of a Political Committee. Here it is necessary to be flexible, as it is always necessary under Bolshevik organizational concepts to be flexible in making organizational forms fit the needs of the time. Across the history of the party, we have tended to alternate between two general forms of a Political Committee. At times we have had an elected P.C. in the past, when the given situation in the party dictated that need and I should stress that any time we have resorted to an elected committee the tendency has been for it to be relatively small.

At other times, we have functioned with a resident P.C., which in turn tends

to be a relatively larger committee. The composition of a resident committee, by the very nature of the definition the term implies, is this: It is composed primarily of the regular members of the National Committee resident in New York, who have the decisive voting power within the resident Political Committee, just as the regular members of the National Committee have the decisive voting power in a plenum of the National Committee. The resident committee may also include alternate members of the National Committee, who have voice but no deciding vote in the Political Committee deliberations. Since the advisory membership category was added to the National Committee beginning in 1962 there has been this added component on a resident P.C., insofar as anyone holding advisory membership status was present in the center.

Now, as I said, the tendency has been for a resident committee to be relatively larger than an elected committee, and we have developed to a point where, as I will seek to illustrate, there is an inordinately large resident committee today. There are some reasons for this that are worth noting. To begin with, there always tends to be a relative preponderance, within the National Committee as a whole, of members who are resident at the party center in New York. This stems from the necessity to draw various members of the National Committee from the field into the center to help carry out the central leadership functions. So, for that reason, there will usually tend to be certain relative preponderance, within the N.C. as a whole, of members who are resident in New York.

A second factor has operated to arrive at the situation where we have the present inordinately large resident committee. For a considerable period of time we have grappled with the problem of infusing some new, younger blood into the National Committee, and we have done so to a degree by gradually increasing its size. Since 1962 the numerical expansion has been further accentuated by the institution of the advisory membership category. As a result, we stand at a point today where there are twenty-eight regular members of the National Committee, twenty alternate members, and five advisory members; a total of fifty-three. Of that total just about half, twenty-five, are presently resident in New York. And that is the numerical content of the outgoing resident Political Committee.

A committee of that size is a somewhat ponderous body from the point of view of flexibility in workaday leadership

functions. You can't always call a committee of that size together in a hurry. When the committee does meet, by its very size -- with all N.C. categories on the resident P.C. having voice, if not vote -- questions before the P.C. come up for quite a round robin of discussion. I think it's apparent on the face of it -- it certainly is to the comrades who have been living through the experience here at the center -- that the P.C. becomes unwieldy to a point that begins seriously to impair its capacity to carry out the necessary leadership functions.

Loosely described, I would say there are three essential categories of matters that the Political Committee deals with in carrying out its duty. First, political questions as such, including the line of the press. Second, matters of political administration within the party and concerning the work of the party. Third, organizational supervision of the party. These categories could not be dealt with adequately in such a large committee and, as a result, a pattern developed in which certain of the functions normally carried out by the Political Committee were of necessity taken over by the Secretariat of the P.C. So let me give a brief picture of the Secretariat side of the organizational form, as this has been manifested in our experience.

The Secretariat, as a subordinate body of the Political Committee -- just as the P.C. is a subordinate body of the National Committee -- has not been a constant form either. Sometimes we have had a Secretariat and sometimes we have not. Sometimes the administrative functions between meetings of the Political Committee have been carried out by the elected national officers in informal consultation with other leading comrades. In recent times -- in part out of this very problem that I am attempting to describe basically -- we have operated more and more consistently with a Secretariat of the Political Committee, and out of necessity it became, to a certain extent, a Political Committee within a Political Committee, rather than just an administrative subcommittee. Not because anybody wanted it that way, not because we were blindly stumbling into anything, but because of the nature of the basic problem. And the whole difficulty created in carrying out the central leadership functions, as a result of this problem, is now becoming aggravated by the increasing tempo in the development of our intervention in the antiwar movement. So we feel it is necessary to make the change, here and now, to an elected Political Committee.

We propose an elected Political Committee that will be a substantially smaller body than the present resident committee. I should point out also, that passing to a smaller elected P.C. elimi-

nates any necessity for a Secretariat of the kind that has had to function in the recent times with relation to the resident P.C. It will be up to, and should be left to, the elected Political Committee to work out its own manner of handling the administrative side of things between meetings of the P.C. itself.

The question also arises: if we are going to have an elected Political Committee, it will consist of only a part of the members of the National Committee resident at the center, so what will its relationship be with the other resident N.C. members? We discussed that in the resident committee in arriving at the recommendations that are to be presented here at the plenum at this time, and it is the consensus that this will present no big problem. For one thing, the relation between the elected P.C. and the other resident N.C. members can be worked out on an organized consultative basis in such a way that -- with political-administrative and organizational-supervisional matters handled by the elected P.C. -- there can be genuinely political joint sessions of all resident N.C. members. The manner of approach we contemplate is that it be left to the elected P.C. to arrange from time to time, as the situation indicates is necessary and desirable, for consultative sessions between the elected P.C. and the other resident N.C. members. To cite an example of subjects for such broader consultation, take the matter of evaluating the outcome of the Washington experience in the antiwar campaign. Had there been an elected Political Committee when that matter came up it probably would have been disposed to call a general consultative session of all the N.C. members resident at the center to evaluate the situation. To cite one more example: when we learned that Fidel Castro had made an attack on Trotskyism, that again was an occasion on which the elected P.C. would seem disposed to call a general consultative session of all the National Committee members at the center to weigh this development, collectively think out its meaning as best we could and decide how we ought to approach the problem. I could give other examples, but I think those illustrate the point.

While I'm on this subject of consultation let me touch on an aspect extending beyond the party center. As we reported at the time of the post-convention plenum, and as has been demonstrated in fact by the timing of this plenum, we are orienting now toward the perspective of undertaking to have a plenum of the National Committee about every six months. That stands in rather sharp contrast with the pattern that has been followed for quite a period of time. Previously we were much more in a holding operation and there was much less activity than there is today. We fell into a routine in which we

tended to have one full-dress plenum at about midpoint between the biannual party conventions. We propose to change that now, as a matter of perspective, and that in turn steps up the tempo of consultation and collective thinking by the entire National Committee. It enables the Political Committee, the other N.C. members at the center, and the N.C. members in the field to come together more frequently for general consultation, sizing things up: where are we, where are we going, what's necessary, what's possible?

Now we come to the question of the criteria we should have in mind in deciding the size and composition of an elected committee. As we all well know, it is not a matter of just arbitrarily saying that this, that and the other comrades should be members of the committee and that should be it. Rather, we have to take cognizance of some problems that are facing us on the whole leadership question. Here, let me begin with this factor. On the one side, as we have learned from Leninism, and as we have learned in the whole experience of our party, continuity in leadership is a very important factor. Continuity in leadership carries with it the corollary of striving to maintain a relative equilibrium in leadership, which, in turn, is a decisive factor in maintaining relative homogeneity within the party. With these qualities the party is able to go ahead on its basic line, determined by majority party decision, and yet leave room for differences of opinion from time to time, so long as the total relationship can remain within the framework of disciplined conduct and a party-loyal attitude on the part of each and every comrade. In that sense, continuity in leadership and the party equilibrium that derives from it must be considered regarding our present problem.

Then, parallel to that, arises the question of transition in leadership. On the one side, the longer comrades play a leading role, and the greater opportunity they have to get experience that helps them to learn -- within the framework of their individual limitations, as determined by that combination of strengths and weaknesses that are characteristic of every individual -- the better they are able to carry out the leadership tasks of the party. But time takes its toll. Each individual life span is limited. Even if you have good luck from the point of view of illness and accidents in life, sooner or later the grim reaper is going to come along, and we must always think of the party's future. So continuity in leadership must in its most complete sense also include the question of transition. And in this respect we're passing through a quite complex process.

A transition has been carried forward, to a considerable degree, from the

founding leaders of the party who long carried the central leadership responsibility, to comrades in the next age category, that is, the older of the comrades who play a central role in carrying out the leadership responsibility at the present time. At the same time that we're in the process of grappling with that aspect of transition, we have to pay attention to the very important matter of preparing the way for younger comrades to come forward into central leadership roles. In the interests of continuity and transition we have sought to have an interim increment of comrades that are about a generation younger than the older comrades who carry the central responsibility today. We are also seeking to open the way for still younger comrades -- real, genuine youth, not yet thirty years old, if I may use a criterion that I hear voiced around -- to become part of the central leadership team. So, from this side of the question, it came to our minds that, in determining the composition of an elected P.C., it should be more or less representative of this process of transition across generations.

Our second category is the degree of political development and the level of leadership stature manifested by the various comrades, as the party has been able to test them in life up to this point. On this we have taken cognizance of the fact that a process is developing in which, gradually, some comrades are beginning to emerge with one or another degree of demonstrated leadership capacity. We take cognizance also of the fact that this process is conditioned in part by the situation at the moment. Leaders can carry out different functions -- and there's one or another degree of importance concerning the presence of a given individual in the central leadership -- according to the nature and scope of party intervention into the mass movement. In this connection we have thought in terms of recognizing the development of leadership stature, as proven in life, so far as opportunity has permitted such a test. At the same time it must be kept in mind that little has been definitively determined in this respect because of limited opportunities. In the changing situation in our movement, in the changing complex of the leadership development, a shake-down is going on within the cadres, and a certain degree of time, of experience, of the test of life, is necessary to resolve it.

How, then, do you arrive at some kind of a determinant, a synthesis of these contradictory aspects of things, and form an opinion about who to propose at this time for an elected Political Committee? The more we have weighed the question, the more we are inclined to believe that, at this juncture, an organizational-functional criterion in leadership terms is about as good a guide as you can find.

It's a loose measuring stick, more a carpenter's rule than a machinist's micrometer, but we think it serves in the given situation. It recognizes, on the one side, that comrades now carrying out one or another function of a leadership nature are showing some degree of proven leadership ability. On the other hand, it also recognizes that today's choice of an elected P.C. is only a selection based on the living situation of the moment, as it is disclosed through the present functional criteria in the workaday life of the leadership. Ample room is left for subsequent changes as further party experiences unfold in the sorting out of leadership potential within the cadres. We think that criterion is adequate and, as a matter of fact, perhaps even the most realistic at the moment, particularly when you keep in mind that a decision made at this plenum does not necessarily stand any longer than the next plenum of the National Committee. I don't mean to imply that we assume there will have to be changes at the next plenum. That would remain to be seen. I seek merely to emphasize and underline one point -- we are not making all-time decisions in the action taken here today.

With the foregoing synopsis of some of the essential features of the P.C. problem, as we see it, I now submit the following specific recommendations to the plenum on behalf of the outgoing Political Committee: We propose that the plenum elect, at this time, a Political Committee of ten. The outgoing committee

has a slate of ten to recommend. The criteria for their nomination, in terms of function, are roughly these: Comrades who are presently members of the Secretariat. Comrades in editorial posts, who need close political consultation with the P.C. in carrying out their tasks. The organizer of the New York branch, because of the distinctive characteristics of that branch which functions in the real political capital of the country. On this point let me add that the New York comrades are in the process of making a change in organizers. Comrade Nat, who has been the organizer, is taking a new assignment and he is being replaced in the post by Comrade Barnes. The final category relates to the youth. For all the obvious reasons it is important to have a youth representative on the P.C. At times we have also had a P.C. representative on the youth NEC but we don't believe that it is necessary in the present circumstances.

So, then, on the basis of the criteria I have described, the outgoing committee now nominates the following slate of ten comrades to an elected Political Committee: Shaw, Halstead, DeBerry, Kerry, Dobbs, Joe Hansen, Novack, Shepard, Jack Barnes, and a representative of the youth to be selected by the youth.

[Editor's note: Recommendations to change to the form of an elected Political Committee and the slate of ten nominated by the outgoing resident P.C. were approved by the plenum.]

NEW ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

(Report to May 1968 Plenum of National Committee)

Comrades, there are three national officers of the party -- national chairman, national secretary, and organization secretary. At present Comrade Cannon is national chairman, I am national secretary, and Comrade Shaw is organization secretary. The Political Committee does not propose any change in the offices of national chairman and national secretary. We do propose that Comrade Jack Barnes replace Comrade Ed Shaw in the organization secretary post. This proposal corresponds with a policy we have consciously been following of undertaking on a practical basis to rotate administrative assignments in the interests of helping to broaden the experience of the central leadership team.

The proposal, it automatically follows, does not connote any change in Comrade Shaw's essential role as a part of the leadership team. He will continue as a member of the Administrative Committee of the Political Committee, along with Comrade Barnes, Comrade Kerry and myself. In the next immediate period his key function will be to cooperate with Comrade Barnes in the transition in organization secretaries. We do not at this time feel it advisable to make any proposals beyond that immediate transitional step as to what his specific function will be in the next period.

I want to take a little time to explain to you why that is the case. Recall the discussion under the youth report to this plenum. One of the things that comes through is that in the course of the current presidential campaign the youth, especially, are breaking into new areas. This means that revolutionary socialist nuclei are beginning to polarize in territories where we have not previously had party formations. This process starts on the basis of contacts developed among the young supporters of Halstead and Boutelle. It implies the formation, in general, first of youth rather than party units and, as a matter of fact, that is already beginning to take place. Such formations are coming into being right now and indications are that there will be an extension of that process between now and November.

When I spoke at the youth convention in Detroit a few weeks ago, one of the things that warmed the cockles of my heart was to look across at the delegate tables and see a delegation from Atlanta, Ga., another one from Oklahoma, another one from Delaware, and so on. This presents us with a brand new administrative problem. We don't anticipate that it will arise in terms of a quick burgeoning of formal party branches. That will come in these new areas, but even before that hap-

pens the party has a special responsibility in working with young comrades in the new areas, as we do with the youth generally -- to counsel them, give them the benefit of the party's cumulative knowledge and experience in their day-by-day work and also to contribute to their political education -- as part of the opening process leading toward their assimilation into the revolutionary-socialist movement.

I just want to note in passing that I use the term "assimilation." Some of the comrades in the discussion used the term "integration." That's an altogether different thing. Integration has to do more with assuring rights and permitting cohabitation and so on. Drawing people into a revolutionary-socialist movement is a much more subtle, many-sided process that is better described as assimilation. That is to say, they become -- we work toward their becoming -- blood and bone of the cadres.

Another factor to keep in mind is that these potential cadres polarizing in new areas are composed of people who are rather green politically. Moreover, the formations are developing in areas that are not immediately contiguous to existing party branches. In those circumstances there will not be any seasoned comrades at hand, as has been the case in areas where we already had party branches. This creates for us a brand new problem concerning liaisons between the party center and the field regarding these new areas. To our mind that poses point blank the need for some restructuring of the central administrative apparatus. It is because of this larger question that we hesitate to say definitively what Comrade Shaw will be doing in the next period. We want to think this out carefully. We want to see what unfolds in the next few months, and get a little clearer idea of the dimensions of the problem. Comrade Shaw's role will be one of the factors, among various considerations, involved in efforts to retool the central administrative staff to deal with these new problems.

These are all problems of growth; they're problems of progress; and they run much deeper than you might think at first sight. We're coming into a qualitatively new stage. We are striving toward -- and we think we're making some significant progress in the direction of -- affirming our revolutionary-socialist hegemony over the radical movement in this country. Part of the problem is political, but another part of it is the organizational, administrative side. In military terms, you might say the presidential campaign is

like the preliminary bombardment when you're getting ready to establish new bridgeheads. Then you've got to come in on the organizational side which, in military terminology, means sending in foot troops to consolidate the captured positions.

Another category that has to be considered is the organizational, administrative side of our work in the three key sectors of the mass movement. That is, the student movement, the black movement, and the trade union movement. As you're all well aware, we're deeply involved and quite well tooled up with respect to the student movement. As the discussion on the black struggle at this plenum indicated, we're arriving at a point where we can anticipate new and encouraging prospects of expanded black cadres as an assimilated component of our party -- or rather a component to be assimilated, to put it more precisely. And this requires extra special effort on our part.

All the foregoing factors must be considered regarding the question of the Political Committee itself. At the brief post-convention plenum last fall, it was agreed that we would hold over to this plenum any question about possible changes in the composition of the Political Committee, because it needed more thought. As we see it, the question of modifications in the composition of the Political Committee is an integral part of the whole problem of restructuring the party's administrative center. When it comes to restructuring the organizational side of the administrative apparatus, this touches on the question of the Political Committee and its composition. When it comes to adjusting ourselves with regard to our work in the various sectors of the mass movement, this touches on the question of the Political Committee. Also to be considered regarding the P.C. are the components involving editorial functions and relations with cothinkers. Taken as a whole, we have a quite complex problem that has to be thought out very carefully. It is therefore the opinion of the Political Committee that it would be unwise to begin grappling with it on a basis of piecemeal improvisations. We need to take a bit more time to think the whole thing out carefully and fundamentally. We won't come to all the answers in a short period of time, but in whatever steps are taken we want to move in terms of the problem

as a whole. For that reason it is the view of the Political Committee that we should hold over the question of changes in the composition of the Political Committee for deliberation at a plenum following the presidential campaign. It would give us a little more time to think about the basic aspects of the problem, and we'll have a clearer view of exactly what the dimensions of the problem are going to be on the basis of the total results of the promising presidential campaign.

It follows that such an approach would connote continuation of the Political Committee as it is presently constituted for the next period. Let me remind you that the Political Committee is now composed of nine members elected directly by the plenum, plus a representative of the youth -- a total of ten. The nine elected members are comrades Shaw, Kerry, Barnes, Novack, DeBerry, Halstead, Hansen, Sheppard, and myself. The tenth member, the representative of the youth, is Comrade Lew Jones. It appears that the youth will decide soon to make a change in representatives. While that will change the composition of the Political Committee, in terms of who is the specific youth representative, it doesn't change the composition of the Political Committee in terms of the way the party plenum decides the composition. The party merely makes provision for a youth representative and leaves it to the youth to decide who the representative will be, and they are free to change the assignment whenever they please. So while there would be this one modification, it does not signify any change in the Political Committee as presently constituted.

To summarize then: There is no proposal at this time to change the composition of the Political Committee. There is no proposal to make any change in the offices of national chairman or national secretary. On behalf of the Political Committee, I submit the nomination of Comrade Jack Barnes as organization secretary.

[Editor's note: The recommendations presented in the report were approved by the plenum.]

A CHANGE IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

(Report to the February 1969 Plenum of the National Committee)

Comrades, as has been the case in this gathering, our deliberations at the plenum last May centered on the changing political situation. In that context attention was called to the development of new administrative problems that require some retooling of the central leadership structure. The problems in this changing situation are too complex to risk any snap decisions, so the Political Committee asked for more time to think about the next steps to take, and it promised to return to the subject at this time. As you know, from the latest P.C. minutes that are contained in your folders, we now have some specific recommendations to present. Essentially, they entail continuation of an elected Political Committee and a modification in the form of the Administrative Committee, which functions as a subordinate body of the Political Committee.

Before I go into the specifics of those recommendations, I would like first to review the background of the problem in its larger sense. Broadly speaking, our party building tasks still remain primarily propagandistic in character. But there are new opportunities developing to engage in political actions. New areas of influence are opening up for us. And these trends put more of a premium on political activists in the central leadership structure. Readjustments are needed to meet the norms of a central leadership that leads in action.

Perhaps it would be helpful if I defined briefly what I mean by that term. I do not mean a leadership that would undertake to place itself at the forefront in every action that takes place and tries to keep things under iron control. A leadership that undertook such a course would succeed simply in making a bottleneck out of itself; and it would tend to inhibit the development of initiative in the party ranks. I do mean, when I speak of a leadership that leads in action, one that is capable of maintaining reasonably close working relations with the party activists on a day to day basis; and a leadership that is able to be where the action is when its presence is required in an unusual, a difficult, or a critical situation.

To meet those needs, there must be an acceleration of the entry of younger comrades into the leadership team here at the center. In deciding what we should do toward that end, another very basic consideration should be kept in mind. If the party is to maintain the necessary equilibrium, its leading bodies should possess both stability and dynamism. Those are

rather abstract concepts thus stated. Much could be said, and should be said to wholly describe what is involved. I won't try to say everything on the point because many of you must catch a plane this afternoon. But I do want to give enough of an illustration to clarify for you the sense in which I use these terms.

When I speak of stability in the leadership, I have in mind requisites such as these: to approach party building with a sense of history, striving to absorb and apply the cumulative lessons derived from the working class struggle against capitalism on a world and historic scale; to keep party activities attuned to objective reality, being on guard against any attempts to overleap objective adversity -- either through opportunist adaptations to the status quo or through ultraleftist, adventurist attempts to substitute the vanguard for the masses in action; to be able to adjust and readjust party tactics from time to time, as changing circumstances may require, without blindly stumbling into deviations from fundamental party policy; to have enough seasoning to be able to face exceptionally critical situations without panicking. These are some of the requirements that I think will illustrate what I have in mind when I speak of the concept of a stable leadership.

Turning now, similarly and briefly, to what is intended in the concept of a dynamic leadership, I will list these qualities: to be able to meet the requirements of a stable leadership without falling into deadly routinism; to strive constantly to keep party consciousness abreast of changing objective reality; to be alert to new opportunities for the party to intervene in the mass movement; to organize such party interventions in a manner that applies the concepts of our transitional program in a viable way, commensurate with the realities of the given situation; and flowing from that, to keep to the forefront at all times the imperative necessity to build a revolutionary, working class, combat party as the key to the solution of the historic tasks of the epoch. With that abbreviated description of these twin qualities of stability and dynamism which must coexist in the leading structure, I come then to the question of how to attain this desirable aim.

For that, we need both the element of continuity based on the existing leadership and an element of transition toward a changing leadership. The element of continuity requires a component of older, more experienced comrades. Their task is

to help lead the party and, in the process, to help educate the younger leaders who are working in the team. In this way they contribute to the quality of stability that is required in a leadership that is also in a process of transition. The transitional process requires a component of younger, less experienced comrades. They must learn while they are leading, doing so with the help of the more experienced comrades. And in that process, their youthful qualities contribute to the dynamism of a stable leadership in ways that I will undertake to describe as I proceed with the report.

It is along these broad lines that we approach the question of modifying the central leadership structure. The question focuses, in the first instance, on the organization of the Political Committee, and then of its subordinate, administrative body. In this connection, too, it seems advisable to sort out some key factors.

Let me begin by distinguishing between the Political Committee's leadership function and its organizational form. The leadership function is a more or less constant factor. Between plenums, the Political Committee carries out the central leadership tasks. It does so as a subordinate body of the National Committee and, at all times, it remains under the control of the parent body, the National Committee. The organizational form of the Political Committee is a different matter. This is considered flexibly according to the needs of the time. In the past, we have tended to alternate between two general forms: an elected Political Committee which tends to be relatively small, and a resident Political Committee which tends to be relatively large.

There have been variations in the composition of the resident Political Committee as we have used that form from time to time. On some occasions it has consisted of regular N.C. members only, who were resident at the party center. At other times, alternate N.C. members were also included in the resident committee; and, since 1962, advisory members on the N.C. have been included in the resident committee category where we have followed that form. Whatever the composition of the resident P.C. at any time, only the regular N.C. members on it have had decisive voting power. Alternate and advisory N.C. members have participated in Political Committee meetings only on a consultative basis.

The large resident Political Committee has always required a special kind of sub-formation to administer party affairs. Usually this has been a Secretariat designated as a subordinate executive authority, acting under the aegis of the resident Political Committee. If such a mechanism

was not set up on a given occasion, then the national officers had to assume an unusual degree of executive authority; and they did so in informal consultation with other leading comrades. In either case, the executive functions were undertaken in the team spirit on which our basic leadership concepts are founded; and I want to emphasize and underline that point. One of the most basic features of our leadership concept is the idea of a leadership that functions as a team -- no glory-hunting individual stars, no anarchism in the ranks of leadership -- a team concept.

At this point I will return for a moment to the question of the establishment of the advisory membership category. It was first set up at the June 1962 plenum of the National Committee, and then formalized at a party convention the following year, that is, in 1963. Comrades, in some instances, who had regular committee status within the N.C., and who were not able to function as actively as they had at an earlier time, were asked to consider assuming an advisory membership status on the National Committee. This meant, simply, that in making the change from regular membership to advisory membership on the N.C. they gave up the right to cast a deciding vote in committee deliberations. They retained the right both to receive all National Committee material and to attend plenums with full voice. And, therefore, they remained in a position to contribute generally to the deliberations of the N.C. Openings on the regular National Committee, created by changes to advisory membership, were to be filled by comrades from the top of the alternate list. And the concept was that this, in turn, would open the way for other comrades to be added to the N.C. as alternates by the succeeding party convention.

As matters turned out, there was little initial response among the regular N.C. members to the advisory membership proposal at the time it was adopted at the June 1962 plenum. The desired change in the component of regular N.C. members who, in the given circumstances at that time, would have comprised the Political Committee -- by the elevation of comrades from the top of the alternate list to regular N.C. membership status -- was not realized. It therefore became necessary in September 1962 to resort to an improvisation in the central leadership mechanism.

At that time there was a resident P.C. of regular N.C. members only. A decision was made in September 1962 to add resident alternate N.C. members to the committee on a consultative basis. The change affected comrades who were high on the list of alternates, and who were playing various leading roles at the party center. The aim was to bring them into

the leadership function in a more meaningful way. At the same time another thing happened. The change also meant a cumbersome P.C. of over twenty members; and this is what led us to the improvisation that I spoke of. About half of the P.C. members at that time had full time party assignments. They were generally available at the party headquarters for specially called meetings; and the P.C. decided to authorize these comrades to act formally for it on administrative decisions. This improvisation gave us a little more flexibility in the leadership function, but it did not solve the basic problem of a cumbersome P.C.

On this point, it is useful to examine why a resident P.C. today must necessarily be cumbersome. Keep in mind, first, that the very nature of the leadership function requires that a substantial proportion of the National Committee members be resident at the party center. We're a centralized organization, as you well know. And some comparative figures will, therefore, help to show what has been tending to happen regarding the resident Political Committee form.

For purposes of comparison, I want to take the time of the labor upsurge in the mid-forties. I pick that time for two reasons: it's a quarter of a century ago and there are some similarities with the present objective situation. There was the post-war upsurge in union struggle. And we were confronted in that given situation with a number of problems that are similar to those we face today. There was a rapid expansion of National Office departments. If memory serves me right, Tom, the paper had a circulation of some eighty thousand for one period at that time. In general, we had quite a bit going. We were involved in things ranging all the way from participating in strike actions to organizing welcoming committees for that fascist joker Gerald L. K. Smith. In that situation the National Committee consisted of twenty-five regular, and fifteen alternate members. That's a total of forty. But there was much less of an age gap within the committee than now exists. At that time, the age gap was, I think, a shade less than twenty-five years between the oldest and youngest members of the committee. The National Committee, as a whole, was better able to meet the requirements of a leadership that leads in action. Everybody on the committee still was young enough and had enough juice that they could pitch to a considerable degree; and you could get more done at that time with a smaller committee than we can today with a larger committee because of what time has done to comrades in the quarter of a century since that period. Under those circumstances, even a resident P.C., a form which we sometimes used then, was much more viable than is the case today.

Now consider what has happened in the quarter of a century since the mid-forties. At present, the National Committee has twenty-eight regular, twenty-two alternate, and six advisory members. That's a total of fifty-six. That's a forty percent increase in the size of the National Committee since the mid-forties. In addition to its being far more bulky, there is now a much more substantial age gap within the National Committee, taken as a whole. The age gap between the oldest and youngest members of the present National Committee in its three membership categories is over fifty years. As a matter of fact, right in the Administrative Committee there is an age gap of close to forty years. And both of these factors become reflected in our attempts to function through a resident Political Committee.

This has given rise to an increasingly impossible situation which led us to a change in form. In 1966 we turned from the resident committee form to a smaller, elected Political Committee of ten, composed of nine regular N.C. members elected to the Political Committee by the plenum, plus a representative to the P.C. designated by the youth. In nominating comrades for election to the P.C. the following criteria were kept in mind: The factor of maintaining continuity in leadership. The parallel need for transition in the leadership composition. The degree of political development of the comrades nominated. The party experience with them in demonstrated leadership capacity. The balanced composition required to fulfill the Political Committee functions which can be described broadly as these: making political decisions within the framework of the established party line; guiding the editorial policy of the press; and supervising party administration.

The elected Political Committee, in turn, set up a subordinate Administrative Committee. Its main tasks have been to supervise workaday party activities and to see to the organizational side of things in general. And it is precisely in carrying out these latter functions that reinforcement of the central leadership structure is most needed today for several reasons.

The new dimensions of party activity are requiring expansion of the national departments. That's one aspect of the problem. Another factor: we are breaking into new areas in the country. The initial development is taking place primarily through the rise of youth formations, but even so, the party is presented with administrative problems. Here, as in all other instances, among the party's tasks is to help educate and guide these new youth units, working in collaboration with

the leadership of the youth organization. In the process we can facilitate the development of party recruits within these formations and, as a corollary, shape a course toward the rise of new party branches in these areas of geographic expansion. Some of the new formations are quite remote from established party units. The young people involved are, by and large, relatively green politically; and they do not have very extensive organizational experience. They need help and guidance from more seasoned comrades. And it is important that they receive direct attention from the party center.

A closer relationship is also required between the central leadership and the party units in general. New problems are arising, even for the established party branches, in these changing political times. This calls for closer working contact between the center and the branches. The branches often need on-the-spot help from the center in difficult and unusual situations; and closer contact with the branches, in turn, gives the center a better feel of the new trends and the attendant problems that arise from these new trends. The center is better able to appraise general political developments and keep the party orientation more closely attuned to changing objective trends.

The recommendations presented through this report are designed, primarily, to help meet such needs. It's not an all time solution, simply an interim step in a complex situation that has been decided upon after weighing several variants, our key aim being to involve more of the younger comrades in the work of the Administrative Committee.

We first considered the possibility of doing this through a return to the previous form of the resident P.C. and through some restructuring of the subordinate executive apparatus. But this would revive the problems that caused us to turn to the elected P.C. in 1966. National Committee members now resident at the center include fourteen regular, seven alternate, and two advisory members. This would comprise a resident committee of twenty-three. It's too ponderous for flexible handling of the leadership function. We would need a smaller executive body. But, as experience has shown, such a body tends to become a substitute for the Political Committee, not by design on anybody's part, but due to the complexities of the leadership task. In short, the definition of the functioning political authority tends to become blurred, and that's a serious problem not to be taken lightly.

We examined the possibility of meeting that problem by creating a political bureau. A bureau would be a smaller body

subordinate to the resident Political Committee, but with certain political latitudes delegated to it. A step of that kind would help offset the tendency to blur the definition of the functioning political authority, but we don't think it would help us out of the administrative bind. The bureau members would, more or less, be comrades who are now on the elected P.C. It would not encompass the personnel needed to expand the administrative apparatus. The need would remain for an administrative committee including some non-bureau members, and such an arrangement, in our judgment would be more apt to add complications to the leadership functions than to improve them.

We also considered a resident Political Committee composed of regular N.C. members only. At present there are fourteen regular N.C. members resident at the center. This would not be so unwieldy a body as a resident committee of twenty-three; but, in effect, we would simply be adding to the size of the P.C. without providing the needed mobility for the Administrative Committee. Party administration today requires, more than ever, comrades who can get around freely. Their duties must include shuttling back and forth between the center and the field, sometimes on quick trips and at other times in more extensive travels. They must be able to go on a moment's notice, and they must be in a position to stay as long as necessity dictates. Such requirements can't be fully met by the regular National Committee members now resident at the center. This is due either to the nature and importance of their present party assignments, or to personal difficulties of one or another kind, or to a combination of such factors.

So our deliberations led, finally, to the following conclusions: It is best to continue with a relatively small elected Political Committee and to retain the Administrative Committee as a subordinate body selected by the P.C. and operating under the direct control of the P.C. Now there are perceptible advantages to this arrangement. A relatively small Political Committee has greater workaday flexibility. There is less danger of blurring the definition of the political authority. And, at the same time, a way can be found to expand the administrative personnel.

This leads, in turn, to the question of the composition of an elected Political Committee. We should note first that it has been party practice to have regular N.C. members only on an elected P.C. The sole exception has been the designation of a youth representative to the P.C. That brings us then to the composition of the present P.C. of ten. One is a youth representative -- at present Comrade Bolduc -- designated by the youth, and that

practice should be continued, including the right of the youth to change their representative to the P.C. at any time they see fit. There are nine regular N.C. members presently on the P.C. as follows: comrades J. Barnes, DeBerry, Dobbs, Halstead, J. Hansen, Kerry, Novack, Shaw, and Sheppard. We propose that these nine comrades remain members of the Political Committee.

Now I want to note an exceptional circumstance here in the nomination of Comrade Sheppard for continuation on the committee. Our usual policy is to include on the P.C. only comrades who are active at the party center. Comrade Sheppard's case is an exception. He is on special assignment abroad and will not be directly active at the center on a workaday basis; but his assignment is an unusual one that contains unique features. He is carrying out this assignment as a direct representative of the Political Committee. He must work in the closest, most intimate collaboration with the P.C., and for him to remain as a member of the elected Political Committee will be helpful in numerous ways. For those reasons, we think an exception should be made in this special case, and he should be continued on the elected committee although he will not be active on a workaday basis at the party center.

We also recommend two additions to the committee. One, Comrade Harry Ring, who is now the editor of the paper. There are two broad considerations that we have always had in mind in our practice of having the editor of the paper be a member of the Political Committee. One is the need for consultation with the P.C. on questions of political line in the paper. Another is that the paper is both a political organ and something else. It is also linked integrally with the organizational mechanisms of the party. It is an instrument for the party activists and it must not be edited simply on the basis of abstract political considerations. It must always be edited with a close feel of the relationship between the general political function of the paper and its specific uses as a tool for the teams of party activists around the country. This requires that the editor have a rather close feel of what is going on generally in the party. So on both counts it is important that the editor be a participating member of the Political Committee.

The second addition that we recommend is Comrade George Breitman. I don't think I have to describe Comrade Breitman's qualifications. He's not always a speaking man, but he's a writing man, and you're all familiar with his leading role in the party. I need only say that at the time we changed to the elected Political Committee in 1966, had Comrade Breitman been resident at the center he would have

been nominated to the elected P.C. right then and there. But he was resident in Detroit at the time. Since then he has returned to New York. We did not raise the question of his being added to the committee at a previous plenum because of an exceptionally difficult physical situation that he was hampered with. But now there has been a degree of upturn in his situation. It appears that it will be possible for him to function on the committee, and we think he should be added to the committee here and now. We make that recommendation with the consideration in mind that Comrade Breitman's work as a P.C. member must be conditioned by his physical situation. We urge that he not risk physical harm to himself out of a desire to discharge to the fullest degree, come what may, his sense of responsibility as a P.C. member. We think a balance can be obtained that will meet the vicissitudes of George's physical situation and, at the same time, make it possible to have the benefit of his participation in the P.C. work.

We recommend a special authorization regarding the Administrative Committee. The proposal is to staff it, in part, with alternate National Committee members. This is a change in practice. We think it's realistic because comrades in this category, by virtue of the fact that the party has designated them alternate members of the National Committee, have enough experience in party leadership to be an asset to a central leadership team. Some among them can meet the requirements for functional mobility in the central leadership, and they can help add a new dimension that is required today in the administrative sphere.

The alternates that would be selected for an Administrative Committee would not necessarily be drawn in exact numerical sequence as they appear on the N.C. alternate list, and I want to explain why. Comrade Pearl, for example is number one on the alternate list. She is resident in Philadelphia. She plays a key role in the branch there, and her personal situation is not such as to make it easy for her to undertake the tasks that are required in the work of an Administrative Committee today. So, it would not appear that she is readily a candidate for this assignment due to these circumstances. The number two member on the alternate list, Comrade Gus, is resident here in New York. His personal situation is such that he could fulfill the functions we have in mind on the Administrative Committee, but it also happens that he is presently assigned to an important role on the editorial team that gets out the paper. He can't just be summarily jerked out of it. If a change were to be made in his assignment, a compensating step would have to be taken with regard to the paper.

From that it follows that in trying to strengthen the Administrative Committee some readjustments are going to have to be made in over-all party assignments, so that we can meet these urgent needs of the center and at the same time keep the necessary equilibrium in the leadership structure throughout the party. That is going to involve consultation with party branches that we may have to draw upon in carrying forward this perspective. For that reason, we can't say in advance precisely who will be involved in the proposed restaffing of the Administrative Committee. It's a matter in which the Political Committee will simply have to be given the necessary leeway to work it out in a practical manner.

Under the proposed arrangement, the composition of the Administrative Committee would include both P.C. members and non-P.C. members, and both regular and alternate N.C. members, along the lines I have described. That brings up the question of their working relationship with the P.C. The Administrative Committee functions as a body subordinate to the P.C. P.C. supervision of its work requires reports and consultation. Therefore the non-P.C. members on the Administrative Committee, we propose, should be allowed to attend P.C. meetings with voice and no vote.

Now a final point. As is usually the case, we can assume that some changes in the National Committee will be made at the next party convention. It may follow that a reappraisal of the central leadership structure would then be in order. But since it may not be realistic to

undertake any basic reassessment at an immediate post-convention plenum, it might prove advisable to hold the matter over to a subsequent plenum. For that reason, the set-up now being proposed should be viewed as possibly remaining operative for at least a year or so.

On the basis of the general motivations outlined in this report, I now submit on behalf of the outgoing Political Committee the following specific recommendations:

A motion: to designate a Political Committee of twelve, composed of eleven regular National Committee members to be elected by the plenum, plus a representative to be designated by the youth.

The outgoing Political Committee nominates the following regular N.C. members for the eleven P.C. posts to be decided by the plenum: J. Barnes, Breitman, DeBerry, Dobbs, Halstead, J. Hansen, Kerry, Novack, Ring, S. Law, Sheppard.

A motion: to authorize the Political Committee to designate an Administrative Committee on which may be included non-P.C. members who may be either regular or alternate members of the National Committee.

A motion: members of the Administrative Committee who are not members of the Political Committee may attend P.C. meetings with voice and no vote.

[Editor's note: The above motions and nominations to the Political Committee were approved by the plenum.]